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Along the Trail of the Friendly Years

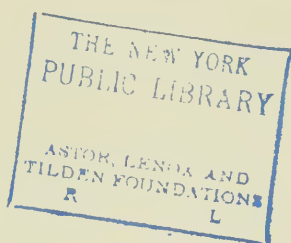
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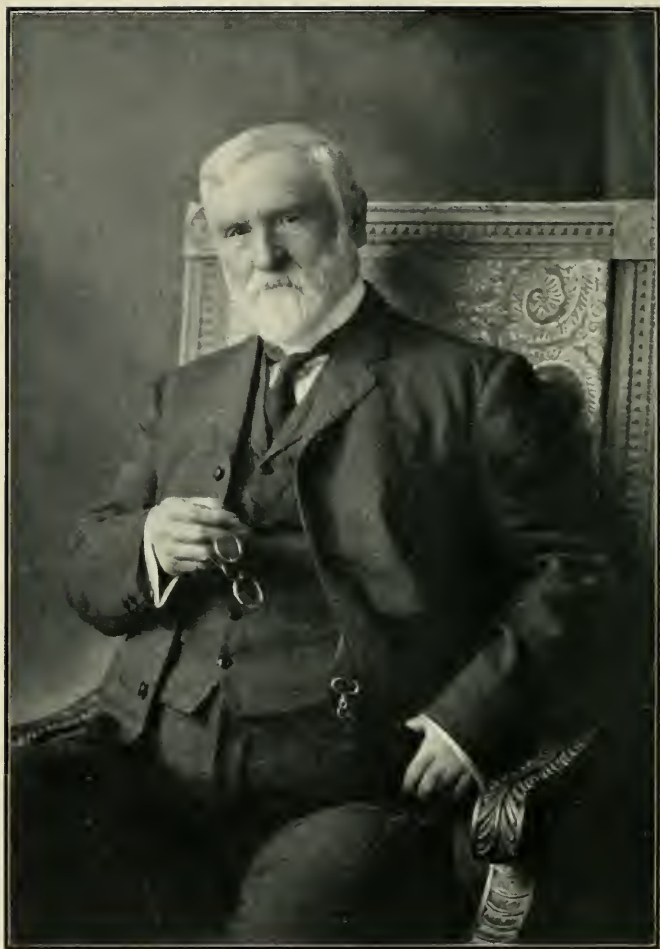
By W. E. HATCHER

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“A book that stirs every emotion of the human heart. Once taken up the book cannot be put down until it is finished, and in the reading, one will laugh and cry, and worship and pray, and resolve, and stand amazed at the marvelous genius.

—*Watchword and Truth.*





William E. Hatcher

Along the Trail of the Friendly Years

By
WILLIAM E. HATCHER, LL. D., L. H. D.
Author of "John Jasper"



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Along the Trail of the Friendly Years

I

DISCOVERING THE WORLD

WHEN I opened my boyish eyes and looked around, it was a primal and rustic scene which came in view. What I did not see was a mother—that was a vision denied me,—the loss of which, dumbly and bitterly enough, I realized. They tell me she was fair, highly cultured for her day, a teacher until she married my father,—then not far from fifty years of age and with six children well-nigh grown up. On the day I was four years of age I saw my mother on the bed of death and never forgot it and then saw her buried beneath the cherry tree back of the garden and understood nothing of it, though faintly remembering it. That was all of a mother that ever crept into my consciousness. They told my brother and myself that she used much of her dying breath in praying that we might be ministers and in that way it seems she entered as a silent factor among the forces which set for us the course of life.

As my look became more capable, I saw great mountains round about our habitation and one especially they pointed out to me very often. They called it the "Peaks of Otter" and it looked so high and blue I thought I could climb to heaven on it. My boyish wonder hovered around its heights and in some way it became "my mountain." I grew up, loving it and for a long time it has been to me the fairest and most wondrous mountain on

the earth. I saw in time the blue, burning mountains of Mexico, saw the weird mountains of Northern Scotland, saw the Alps with their crags, brakes, peaks, glaciers and cascades, but not one, nor all together, could ever supplant the great mountain of my boyhood wonder. It has come to be a personal friend. The train never takes me through Bedford but that I watch for that majestic, friendly, beautiful mountain. In my boyhood it was one of my friends and there were many others of kin and acquaintanceship that I had a heart for. Now, when I go that way, my fine old "Peaks of Otter" is the only friend who has not changed ; others have scattered or died but this friend always awaits me and stands up to greet me.

The look about my neighborhood, as my untutored eyes saw it, was plain, indeed, but my passion for place and people has always been overmastering. I loved nearly every visible thing when I was a boy ; except, possibly, I drew the line on a few impossible folks, but as I peer back into that morning of my beginning, I see very few that I did not believe in and not one that I hated. At home I found my big brother Henry, an incorrigible tease, a man of infinite humor, a laugh-breeder known in all those parts but, with it, sweet as a mother in his love to me and nearly always on my side when a crisis came ; two sisters, one of whom married and went away. I cried my eyes out about it but she went and in later years I got even with her. She became a widow and I was a young bachelor preacher and I beguiled her into keeping house for me for five years and we were as twins in our devotion to each other. She bore the Bible name of Damaris. Then there was sister Margaret, serious minded, fond of books, deeply religious and her example lit the way that lay open towards the heavenly gate. Only a few months ago she, the last of all the children, went within

the veil, ready, if anybody ever was, to see the King in His beauty. Then, there was my mother's son, my full brother Harvey, two years older than I, and we two pulled together, though with temperaments, tastes and pastimes pulling us apart. But of him I will speak in another place.

My father was about fifty years older than I was. He was a stalwart old farmer, with a rugged plantation, a few slaves and the most primitive and inadequate equipments. I slept with him through my boyhood days and for companionship preferred him above all comers. He was very affectionate and insisted on carrying me in his arms almost until my dangling feet came down to his knees. He thought I was grievously and unpardonably lazy. He took it much to heart but would not drive me. I may be mistaken, but I believe now, as I believed then, that I was not made to work in the dirt. I covered him a thousand times with my embraces and endearments but I always drew the line when he wanted me to work on the farm. As a fact, I did work, sometimes with a plow, sometimes with a hoe, sometimes with an axe, sometimes with a wagon and sometimes out in the field with the negroes but I can cordially acquit myself of the faintest desire ever to do anything of that kind. This fault of mine, my father sought by all adroitness to heal. I remember on one occasion he asked me if I was very fond of sweet potatoes, a fact about which he needed not to inquire, and proposed that I would go with him out to the patch and see the condition of the crop. Going with him was the top of life to me but when the journey meant work to come, that was quite a different matter. We reached the potatoes and found the vines sorely beset with grass. He began to pull it up and finally invited me, in a cheery way ; I joined, but not in a cheery way, and after a while I said to him, brazenly enough, perhaps, but with utmost

seriousness, that I had come fully to the conclusion that the Lord did not intend for me to work in the dirt. I saw that the utterance caused him to quiver but he did not lose his temper ; he said, with a fine touch of sorrowful satire, "I begin to think that it is true and I have been studying why it was that God made you at all and I have concluded that He created you to starve, as a warning for all idle boys that may come on later."

"No," said I, "I hope not ; I do not expect to starve ; I have a hope that I will always have enough to eat and a great deal of it that is good but I do not think that I will have to dig it out of the ground."

The shadow deepened on his face but he was full of a noble tenderness and he said no more.

A little while after that Dr. Jeremiah B. Jeter, a nephew of my father's and quite a distinguished minister at that time, came on a visit to our house from Richmond, where he was then pastor of the First Baptist Church in that city. My father was thoroughly devoted to him, trusted him and admired him and it was always a great point of pride with him that he selected the woman who became Dr. Jeter's third wife. It was a momentous time with us when "Cousin Jerry" came to see us. The slaughter among lambs, shoats and fowls was something frightful, in view of his coming. It was a treat to me because my father gave up everything to entertain "Jerry Bell," as he called the doctor and from morning till night I had nothing to do except to hear Dr. Jeter, so racy, buoyant, hopeful and great-hearted, talk. It was truly a millennial dawn to me.

One afternoon they walked over to see my Uncle Tom, my father's only surviving brother,—except one or two who were in the distant West. I was the uninvited guest of the occasion and rarely missed a word. On our return they had to cross a rail fence and they took seats on this

fence and had quite a long conversation. I chanced to pick up a piece of soft rock and sat down in one of the corners of the crooked fence to carve out a book, for once forgetful of them and they entirely forgetful of me.

Presently, I heard Dr. Jeter ask my father how his children were doing and my father made reply, which carried quite a good measure of pardonable pride, summing up the statement by saying that all of them were fully satisfactory except one and then, beginning at the oldest and coming on down the line, somewhat minutely described each one. I listened largely to find out which one it was who was so imbittering the life of my father by misconduct and I was quite ready to break my vials of fury on the head of the ingrate as soon as his name was called. Slowly he came along down the list, having good things to say about every one, until he reached the end of the line and I only was left. He spoke with fatherly gentleness but uncovered his sorrow in regard to me by saying that he trembled as to my future. He stated that he felt more concern and unhappiness about me than he did about all the other children put together. Hid back in the corner of the fence, I heard his statement, shocked with shame, and I was a little curious to know how it was that I was breaking the old gentleman's heart in such a pitiless way. Dr. Jeter expressed much regret and seemed to be wonder-struck that I was turning out to be such a miscreant. The thing struck him as a tragedy and, after beating around the bush a while, he spoke.

"Is he vicious?" he asked, with grave anxiety. If somebody had shot me, I do not believe that I would have jumped higher. That word "vicious" I had never heard before in my life and really did not know exactly what it meant, but there was something deadly in the emphasis put upon it by Dr. Jeter. If my father had

said that I was vicious, I would have felt that the day of my execution ought to be set. I waited in a tremor to hear what would come next. To my infinite consolation, my father broke into the pleasantest laugh that I ever heard from him.

"Why, no," he said, "he is not vicious, but is the most affectionate of all my children and would never get out of sight of me if he could help it."

That put the matter in a better light and my self-respect, so suddenly shattered, began to pick up again.

"What is the matter with him?" Dr. Jeter asked, as if he were bewildered.

"He is no account upon the earth," said my father, "for work. He hates any kind of work in the dirt and says that he does not believe that God has made him to work in the dirt."

"What does he do?" said Dr. Jeter. "How does he spend his time?"

"Why, he does nothing except to read," said my father; "it is books when he gets up, books all day and books at night; he knows every book on the plantation by heart."

There my good father went astray; I did not know all the books by heart on the plantation, though if I had, I would have still been mortally ignorant of very many things, for the books at our house were few and dull.

Then came Dr. Jeter's time to laugh.

"Send him to school," said Dr. Jeter. "It may be that the Lord has made him that way, sure enough; there are many things for people to do besides work on the farm and, while I am sorry he has such an aversion to it, I am glad to know that he is not rebellious nor wicked nor hard to manage."

I was still sitting back in the fence corner and the outcome of it left me in a tremor, for I was yet uncertain

whether my father felt towards me as I would have him feel, for largely my life was wrapped up in him.

He never mentioned that interview to me at all but about a month afterwards I was placed in quite an excellent school; there I remained for nearly three years; there I laid the foundation for the moderate education which it was my good fortune afterwards to gain.

Life was on a narrow scale in my little Bedford neighborhood. We were twelve miles from the county seat, had mail once a week, and church once a month, when the weather was good. A blacksmith's shop, a tan-yard and a store, with a mill farther on, constituted all of our public interests. As I had no horse to shoe, no letters to write or receive, not a copper to buy anything with and did not belong to the church, my communication with the outer world amounted to naught. This statement was modified by one exception. I did attain to the honor of being a mill boy and every Saturday morning "Old Fillie" was bridled, a bag of corn was balanced on her back and the giant arms of my brother hoisted me astride the mare and bag and, with only the necessary garb in warm weather to save me from public disgrace, I jogged my way over to Chilton's Mill. There I always had an interesting time. The proprietor of the mill had a most unsavory name in that community but he was rich, he had quite a handsome assortment of books, always welcomed me into his office, was a glib and captivating talker and was one of two or three men on the earth at that time who seemed to be conscious of my existence when I came along. It added immeasurably to my self-respect that he would frequently invite me, while I was waiting for my grist, to accompany him to his house for dinner. This pleased me exceedingly and I was always quick to report, when I returned home, with what extraordinary consideration I was treated. But let me say

here and possibly explain afterwards that for some reason, not at all understood by me at the time, I could not eat the great man's dinner. There was a constraint in the house that weighed upon me like a mountain ; the air seemed freighted with death and, while I could not tell why, when I got out and away from the house, I had an irresistible impulse to fill the hills with my shouts. In after days the secret came out—the darkest, most tragical and the most ruinous of all the secrets that I have known on the earth.

At that mill there was employed a modest but sensible and attractive young man. He looked after the grinding of the grain and also the carding of the wool and, while perhaps almost ten years older than myself, he was the most congenial and helpful person in the entire neighborhood to me. He came of a plain but respectable family but it was by his own merit that he won his way in the neighborhood. He went out of that mill to enter school as a ministerial student and, after graduating at the old Columbian College in Washington City, he took a little mission church in a repulsive part of Washington, where he encountered the gravest drawbacks and difficulties ; but he went there to stay and that was his only pastorate, which lasted over fifty years. He saw that part of the town transformed into beauty, saw his church grow into strength and fill up with large numbers, and saw completed one of the handsomest churches in the city. On all the earth I had no better friend than Rev. Dr. Chastain C. Meador, who was my soul's unchanging brother, and when that notable memorial service was held in his honor in the city of Washington, I was chosen to make the historical address on the occasion.

We were not rich enough to have many servants, but we had some, and my recollections of them are very tender and interesting. Uncle Sam was an old man, or

seemed so to me, when I was a boy. He was not very bright, but was the soul of honesty, always ready to work and full of kindness to me. He drove the wagon, and it was a part of the pride of my childhood that he was always glad to let me go with him when he could and he would please me by letting me handle the reins and sometimes crack the whip. Aunt Charity, his well-behaved wife, kept her cabin clean and nice. She was high-tempered enough to give the boys the pleasure of fretting her sometimes, and I would not disturb her sleeping dust by misrepresenting her, but if she did not henpeck Uncle Sam, then I was incapable of understanding what form of amusement henpecking was in those days. But Uncle Sam adored her—in his dull eyes she was perfection on the earth and nothing he had or could do was counted dear to him if it would please her. They had a daughter and her name was Charlotte, a proud, haughty and overbearing woman. She was the cook and the children knew that they had to keep on the right side of her, and she affected all sorts of tyrannies and cruelties to keep us in proper subjection, so that we would not invade her kingdom and rifle her shelves. She would lock the kitchen on us and call high heaven to witness that she would not give us a mouthful to save us from an untimely tomb and then set biscuit and other things in the window, where she knew that we would steal them; and this she did, partly because in reality she loved us, and partly because she wanted to provide a new pretext for breaking forth in other volcanoes of pretentious wrath.

Charlotte married the most aristocratic negro in the neighborhood. He was a widower, with enough dignity to start a palace and with a right snug little treasury of his own; he was head man on a great plantation and, of course, had the proud distinction of being hated by all the least respectable of the slaves who worked under

him. I never believed that Charlotte loved him, but she did not need a husband to love, she needed a man to be proud of, one who could set her above the common run and take her around on spectacular occasions. They had their house and little yard fixed up with a special view of exciting the envy of all of the neighbors. There were others. But peace to their ashes! They can have no place here.

I never had but three companions outside of our home and they were three cousins. Robert was the oldest of the three, five or six years older than I was, good-natured, mortally dull and too grown-up to covet any intimacy with me. In my boyhood days the turning out place for a boy was when he got a broadcloth suit of clothes. It was with a quaking heart that I heard that Robert would appear the next Sunday in his "broadcloth." It was a straining event with me. It meant that he was to be grown, that he would be expected to go to see the girls and that the days of his boyhood were clean gone forever. It was almost as if he was about to die. I really wondered what he would look like and whether I could talk to him just as I had done before. To my surprise, almost to my contempt, he walked over that afternoon pinked up in his "broadcloth." Even I could see that it did not fit; I saw too that he had his pants, as we called them then, rolled up, and he looked about as common, except his clothes, as I had ever seen him. It was a distinct disappointment to me; "broadcloth" did not fulfill my expectations. It could not make a star out of plain and stupid Bob. The enchantment of the change was gone and from that time Bob swung between a reluctant companionship with the boys and a grotesque struggle to mix with the girls.

My second cousin was Tom. He was handsome, grave, and, as he stayed in a store, he wore store-clothes. What

added incomparably to his significance in my eyes was that he had a sweetheart, whom he never mentioned and rarely went with. He sang charmingly ; indeed, I envied him his beautiful voice and the rich tenor notes. It cut me very low when it was announced that he was going to Missouri. That was in the long, long ago and, though he is living, I have never seen him and have never exchanged a letter with him since we parted. So cheap and perishing are childish friendships, and yet he lives in me and influences me to this day.

The youngest of the trio was Henry. He was nearer to me in age, very kindly natured but motherless and dependent and my boyish soul clung to him with ardor undying. A thing occurred with Henry that struck me a blow from which I never recovered. He was probably three years older than I was, himself about thirteen and I about ten. Up to that time I had never had any very distinct religious convictions. In a boy's crude way I thought religion was a good thing and that some time it would come my way, but little did I know what it was, nor how it would come and surely I was not in any hurry to have it come. They had their August meeting at the Mount Hermon Church, a church founded at first by my grandfather, Jeremiah Hatcher, and called for many years after his name. Quite long before my appearance upon the earth they had moved the church and changed its name to Mount Hermon. One day during that meeting I went into the church in the afternoon and sat far back towards the door and Henry had a seat on a bench in front of me. I recall him now, a biggish, rough boy ; his hair long grown and unkempt ; his clothes coarse of stuff, home-made and ill-fitting ; his face sunburned and disfigured with reddish bumps and his look, even to my eyes, was desolate, though I thought he had been made that way and would have to stay that way. The sermon was over,

the congregation was standing, the revival song was breaking with almost cyclonic power through the house and people were going forward as "mourners," as religious inquirers were then called. I was back there, eyeing things with shy curiosity but with not a religious twinge in any part of my being. I chanced to look up towards the pulpit and saw a young woman walking down the aisle in my direction. The sight startled me, for in those days men and women sat apart in the church and the sight of a young girl venturing down our aisle startled even me. She was dressed in spotless white, evidently timid and unused to what she was doing. When she got down to Henry she turned into the bench and walked in and laid her hand on his shoulder. She was my sister and one of earth's purest, but for that time I was shaken with great surprise. I wondered what she wanted with Henry and presently I found out. I heard her say, "Henry, I have been praying for you," and I know perfectly well that I never heard anything before that had such tenderness and sweetness as marked her words. As for Henry, he melted at once and began to weep and I, dumb with wonder, looked on and felt excited in a new spot of my being. I stood at an angle that enabled me to see Henry's face. It ran with tears and I saw some of them leap from his eyes to his rough clothes; his frame shook with convulsed emotion. That was all she said and it seemed to me that that was enough. I knew what she meant; I knew what she was down there for. "I came for you, Henry, if you feel that you want to make a start for the Christian life; and if you do, I would like to take your hand and go with you."

It seemed to me that I was in another world and such a jumble of emotions and perplexities stormed through my soul that I knew not what to do except to watch Henry. Slowly he lifted up his big, rough, battered hand

and held it out to her. She took hold of it with one hand and put the other around his shoulder, and, as they moved out into the aisle and went towards the pulpit, there thumped into my soul the tremendous conviction that religion was about the biggest thing that had ever gotten into this world. I knew also that the young woman was full of it and that Henry had gone to look for it and, what was more, I wanted to go too, but I was a mere scrap of a chap and about all that I knew was that everybody in that house would think that I was a fool if I went and I did not go.

In a little while it was abroad that Henry was converted. I had no idea on earth what it meant except that it must be that something had happened to him in the way of religion. I looked at him with awe and when he was baptized I longed to know what was the matter and how he felt and all about it but I hid my thoughts. Henry proved to be no saint ; indeed, he was a little too much like he had been for producing the best effect on me and yet I never doubted him. He was truth embodied, not fond of books, not gifted, but there was a genuineness in him that I feasted on. A few years turned him into a man and entangled him into a premature but a most devoted and happy marriage. Then came that unforgettable horror, the Civil War, and Henry, with wet face, kissed his wife and baby good-bye and went to be a soldier. Somewhere near Harper's Ferry on the Potomac a hostile shot crashed through him. They took him to Winchester and for days he languished in the hospital. It was said that he wrote back to Bedford that he was greatly distressed that he could not get to Mount Hermon any more. He loved his church and loved his Saviour and loved the good old people at Mount Hermon and wished that he could come again before he died but that it did not matter so much, he was ready for his end ; the hope

which broke into his soul in that revival had never died and was with him in the hospital as his abounding comfort and support and that if they could not meet on earth, it would not be hard to wait until they could be together on the other shore. After I became a Christian, Henry and I were true yokefellows and we used to meet in the woods, sing the mountain songs and cheer each other in our religious struggles.

Only a few months ago I was summoned to Bedford to attend the funeral of that woman who, over sixty years before, had prayed for Henry and had brought him out into the light. Her body was put to rest in the rude cemetery at the old church. A generation that knew not Henry surged around her grave and I told the story of Henry's conversion, feeling sure that it was a bit of history that carried in it the seeds of eternal life and that others would come the way that Henry came because they heard how he came, and that others yet would pity motherless and lonely boys and offer a hand of help to them in their struggle to attain eternal life.

I learned early in life that it was a contradictory thing, and yet possible, for a boy to love a man to idolatry and yet be teased out of existence by the waggishness, buffoonery and satire of that identical man. That man was my brother Henry. In my estimate, princes and kings were trivial circumstances compared with him. He could put me into convulsions by blinking his eye or by an odd pantomime or by a witticism or even a look. He could almost break up a dinner party by a single remark suggested by the occasion and irresistible by reason of its aptness and humor. His fun-making, I suppose, was always kindly intended but it was as sharp as needles and sometimes as stinging in its effect.

I do not think that I had but one every-day suit for winter and that was made of wool taken from the backs

of our sheep, carded, spun and woven in our house, dyed with ill-odored, home-made dyes, cut out and warranted not to fit and was ugly and unattractive and usually very slow to wear out. But one winter mine did wear out and I was not sufficiently presentable to go to school where the rich boys and girls of the neighborhood went and, after long consultation, it was decided that a pair of my big brother's trousers should be cut and whacked and knocked up for my use during the rest of the season. I opposed it openly and with scornful defiance. I told them that I did not want to wear anybody's old clothes and what added to the horror of it all, when they were ready for me to try them, the reconstructed pants refused to fit me in any single spot. I was angry enough to fight the whole earth when I tried them on and with cowering shame I fled from inspection. What added grievously to my discomfort was the infinite ridicule and merriment of my brother. To him it was a jubilee, a revel, a comedy and the sparks of his wit never flew thicker or faster than when, in dire necessity, I was compelled to wear those pants. It was a humiliating, embittering, infuriating experience and the more I was miserable about it, the richer was the strain of hilarity and merriment on my brother's part. I threatened several times to hate him for the balance of my natural life and would have been delighted to do it except that I felt sometimes even when I wanted to choke him that I merely wanted to hug him. One time, however, my patience went wild and in my towering rage I confronted him and they say I delivered the following eloquent address on the occasion :

“ Very well, go on with your gibes and cruel treatment of me. I will wear your old suits, though I despise them while I do it. I wear them because I can do no better now, but I tell you the day of vengeance will come. I

expect to live yet to see the day when you will be glad to wear my old clothes.”

This added to the jests of the hour and whenever friends came in and I was about, the pants, ill-fitting and horrible to me, became the topic of talk and it was generally added that I had uttered a prophecy that the time would come when my brother would feel proud to inherit my cast-off clothes. Truly it can be said that the episode of the breeches left no scars on my soul and never abated one jot my admiring affection for my brother, but it must be admitted that my prophecy clove to my memory and I was earthly minded enough to hope that its fulfillment would come.

It did come, and came sooner than I expected and in a way that I could not enjoy very much because the surprise of it was something that my brother could not enjoy at all. When I finished at college I went to be a pastor in Manchester, Va. Every young preacher of any parts has his little run of popularity and I had mine. It did not run very far, nor very long nor very high but in the matter of clothes, in no great while, I became overstocked. My brother was a farmer, kindly taking care of the old home and full of courteousness to our old father, and I went for the first time after my pastorate began up to the old Bedford home for a week's visit. In packing to go I determined to take along some cast-off clothing for the servants, which I knew they would be glad to get for Sunday wear and, while doing this, the memory of the red-yarn breeches loomed before me. I had quite an elegant suit; one capable of much respectable wear yet, but I slipped that suit in. My brother and myself roomed together. All the week I had those clothes in my trunk but said nothing. I was to remain over Sunday and preach. Saturday morning as we were dressing, I drew out the clothes that I carried for the colored people and

told my brother that he could distribute them in the way that would count best and then I said in a casual, far-away manner that there was a suit that I thought possibly he might put on to ride over the farm, to the post-office or at such times as might suit him. I spoke doubtfully and modestly and landed the bundle on the bed in plain view and went on talking about other things. Meanwhile, I watched my brother and I actually gurgled with glee as I saw him pick up the clothes and sample them piece by piece.

"Why do you not wear these clothes?" he asked, evidently interested. I told him in the most careless, nonchalant manner that I had rather an overstock of clothes and I did not believe that I would need that suit again but that he must not be bothered with it.

"Bothered with it?" he inquired; "it's an excellent suit and quite handsome and I will be delighted to accept it if it does not deprive you." I told him that settled it.

The next morning he and I rode to church on horseback in company. When we were dismounting quite a string of my friends, kins-people, schoolmates and others came forth to give me a greeting and, after a hand-shake, one of them turned to my brother and congratulated him upon being dressed so handsomely and threw at him the joke that he was evidently going out on one more romantic campaign. Several joined in to compliment him upon his handsome appearance and he carried it off with characteristic ease and humor.

Just the same I knew that he had on my old clothes and that all of this demonstration bore on the little matter between him and myself, which occurred just ten years before, but I said nothing. That afternoon there was a sort of neighborhood rally at our house; the great room which we called the parlor was filled up and the tide of friendly chat and rustic humor rolled high.

I had put one or two friends into my secret and in the midst of all our genial clatter, one of these men tempted my brother to revive some of his favorite jokes on me. That opened the flood-gates and such a train of laughable and ludicrous stories my brother turned loose on me that afternoon.

"Tell the story of the red breeches," some one cried out and my brother, blissfully oblivious of what might come, told the story with infinite gusto and almost turned the company into a mob of laughter and happy excitement.

"What was it he said about his old clothes?" another asked and even then my brother, though, I think, dimly apprehensive that he was treading on the crumbling edge of things, told all about it in his inimitable way. Then came the explosion—far more overwhelming than I could have dreamed of.

"Where did you get those fine clothes you got on now, Henry?" he was asked and then the whole story came out. They scourged him with a tornado of jests and rollick and banter. I cannot say that I enjoyed the victory very keenly. I was human enough to plan it and to push it but the retribution of it had scant relish for me and never in a lifetime afterwards was the matter again mentioned between us but once and that in a casual and by no means jocular way.

When I peer back into those far-away days and see myself as a lad, I confess that my soul melts with compassion for the motherless, lonesome, ambitious boy that I was. I fairly died for appreciation. I did not know what was the matter but I suffered unutterably for the want of a mother, for an intelligent sympathy, for some one who could mark my little sorrows, dress my little wounds, wipe off my tears when I cried and kiss me when I went to bed. A thousand times or more I have

stated that I did not know what was meant by the pleasures of childhood ; they did not come to me. I dare say that there was little in me that was attractive ; they tell me that I was sickly, sensitive and too fond of being alone. Books were my companions and it was a sorry lot of books I had, but if I could feel fit to give people advice in regard to boys, I would urge that they treat them with more reverence. Men shy off from boys as if they were an incurable nuisance and incapable of being shaped up for the future. I verily believe that of all classes of human beings boys, if properly respected and duly recognized and delicately appreciated, are the most flexible and responsive of all human material to work on.

I recall three men who did more to inspire me than everybody else put together. They were not great men—they were not popular men and they did not have very much opportunity to help me but they said things that counted with me. One was a man with fatal blemishes and of a tragic nature, but he gave me books to read and talked with me about what I read and made me feel that the book world was created for boys. Another was an old farmer, a Methodist and many said a skinflint, but he reared a beautiful family and one of my brothers married his daughter and in that way I used to have to go on occasional errands to his house. He talked with me about my school and complimented me on reports which had come to him from others and, though uncultivated himself, he made me feel that it was something great to get an education. He said to me one day that he wished his boy loved to go to school as I did and it had not occurred to me before that I did love to go to school so much, until he said it. The other benefactor was the venerable old doctor and deacon in the Mount Hermon Church—not a doctor in reality, but he was a very respectable doctor after his own sort. He was the

one that gave me help in the first steps of my religious life and I could almost write a book about him, an appreciative and grateful narrative of all the kindly, friendly things he said to help me in making my start.

II

DISCOVERING THE OTHER WORLD

IT almost brings a blush to my cheek to undertake to write even a few paragraphs concerning the beginnings of my religious life. It is a matter of wonder to me that my childish soul was transfixed with so many serious convictions. My mother died the day I was four years old; my father, though a true believer, was not a member of any church. We were quite a distance from the church which it was our custom to attend; there was preaching only once a month and as I had no way of going except on my two small feet and that through nearly two miles of forest, I was not often found among the worshippers. True they had the bare semblance of a Sunday-school which bloomed with the April flowers and dissolved usually during the revival meetings of August. About all we did in the school was to fumble and balk and stammer through some of the long chapters of the Bible, our teacher doing his full share of the stammering. We had no singing, never a breezy and cheery address, no pictures, only one or two unduly protracted prayers, a dreary waste of empty benches and nothing to do when it was over except to retrace our steps through the dense woodland back to a motherless home.

Not altogether motherless, however. The youngest of my sisters was one of the most Christlike of young women, a woman whose words were few but meaningful. In spite of the absence of so much that goes to make up a home there was a straightforward, sensible and kindly old father—fifty years older than I was—a few good books

and almost too much time for thinking. Not even the blindest admirer could have found anything suggestive or prophetic in my youth except frequent and most pungent religious feelings. Religious habits I knew nothing about and it was by fits and changes my seasons of religious anxiety came. I undertook to read the Bible as soon as I could read at all, but had nothing except the family Bible—a ponderous and unmanageable load. I started with Genesis for I hadn't the faintest idea that I could start anywhere else, and about the only well articulated results which I can now recall were the many crashing falls the Bible had from slipping through my feeble arms and from my repeated readings of Genesis until the front part of the book was mutilated and I also slightly mutilated for not treating the Holy Book with more care.

Just the same I longed to know the way but there was no one to show me. My yearnings struggled within my bosom, and it ran on until I had gotten into my early teens and yet religion was something longed for but unattained. I got into a school of which the teacher himself was anything but a Christian, and in which many of the scholars were larger and older than myself, and among them all not one who wore the Christian name, and a few of them were very irreligious and had already learned to scoff at sacred things.

My school took me away from the church neighborhood, but I heard that there was a great revival meeting in progress at Mount Hermon, the church to which we usually went. The news put a strange fluttering in my boyish heart; I felt that I was in the neighborhood of divine things. All the ardors of my religious nature were kindled into flame. Day after day as I went to school I felt a pungent sense of guilt, and in a lonely ravine which lay near my path I turned aside and found a little altar between the crooked roots of a mighty white

oak, and there going and coming I would bow down and tell the Lord of my troubles. I was hearing already of the conversion of other boys—my brother Harvey among them—and I was sorely afraid that I would be left.

Friday night came and I sped homeward on swiftest feet. That night the moon was friendly and broke the darkness of the great forest, and with no sense of danger but a deepening sense of penitence I went through that forest marking almost every step with a cry for mercy. The house was crowded and I found a seat far back from the pulpit. I saw in the pulpit two men—one, Elder William Harris,—Father Harris the young people called him, with his hair white as the snow and falling in silken softness around his shoulders, with a face tinged with an Indian hue and cheek bones very high, with an eye blue as the sky and radiant with a light not of this world, with a voice mellow, musical and irresistible when he sang, with a white handkerchief tie around his neck and a spotless collar. His coat was like a modern cutaway, black with vast flaps over the side pockets, and out of one of the pockets protruded a clean pipe-stem that pushed back the flap and lifted its unblushing length into full view. He was tall, well rounded, the very figure and form and glory of a fine old man. He preached in that country for over fifty years; fully fifty preachers came into service under his influence and he was everybody's friend, and when he died the land mourned for him and mourns for him yet.

The other minister was a collegian and an orator—Francis M. Barker. I thoroughly believe that he could have preached to ten acres of people and could have been heard by all. That night he preached, and used as his text, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." I heard every word of the sermon and trembled as I heard. The trouble was I was not fit and I had no thought that mercy

was in reach until I was good enough to claim it. I was ready to make the choice if I only could feel that I was ready to appear at the throne of grace and receive salvation. In those days they had the mourners' bench, and surely enough I was a fit subject for the bench, but a crushing sense of uncertainty, unfitness, and depression held me back. I was not ashamed but it looked as if it was not worth while to go—not for me. The people were singing and the crowd was standing up, but I sat still and hardly knew what I did.

At last a venerable gentleman walked down the aisle—I knew him well; it was old Dr. Falls, a deacon in the church, and truly the church had no more ardent lover, and to my surprise he stopped at me, he stooped down so that others could not hear, and I liked him better for that, and in a low voice said to me, "Did you hear the call to-night?"

"I heard it," I said, "and felt that I ought to answer it but I could not start; something is holding me back." He stretched out to me his wrinkled old hand and said in a tone wondrously assuring, "Maybe that might help you to start." There was his hand, stretched out to me and wide open and he was waiting. That made a difference and I put my hand in his and I got strength by his touch and was lifted to my feet by its grasp.

But this must be too common for any one to read, and yet it has worlds of meaning to me. That moment I took my first step, I put my back towards the world, I planted my feet on the Zion road.

And yet when I got to the front seat I was awkward, self-conscious, tearless, distracted, and knew not what to do. The meeting closed and I went home and seemed no better than before. I went back to the Saturday meeting and the dear old doctor, living near the church, made me go home with him to supper and showed me a kindness

in the gentlest sort of way which made me believe in heaven. The house was full of company but its joy and laughter suited me not, and ahead of all the others I started alone for the church, sad enough but thankful that I could be alone.

It was an August night and the moon was near its full and my walk was across a field. Anxious about religion I surely was and yet hard-hearted, clumsy and utterly bewildered. I was waiting for a whirlwind to catch me in its embrace, and in some unscheduled way to drop me into the kingdom of God. As I made my way towards the church I heard a step behind me. I glanced back and recognized a man who had been one of the most reckless and blasphemous men in that country, but who not long before, after an experience much talked about in the neighborhood, had united with the church. His name was Monroe Hatcher. He walked up in a rough but kindly way and said that he was glad to see that I had started out to be a Christian. In bungling fashion I told him I would like to be a Christian but that it was a thing that I did not understand and I did not know what to do.

"What do you think of yourself as you stand in the sight of God?" he asked me. The question confused me; I knew well enough what I was in the sight of God, but I had it in me that no one could be saved as long as he was a sinner. I felt that if I told the man how sinful I knew myself to be he would be ready to give my case up, but it was no time for quibbling and I blurted out the truth. I told him with an anxiety not unmixed with despair that I was much distressed to find that I was so unworthy of the mercy of God, for I felt that I was very sinful before the Lord. "I am glad to hear you say so," was his blunt and startling reply. For a moment he shocked me by seeming to be pleased by a confession which it was most painful for me to make, and I told

him so. "But," he said, "do not think that I am glad you are a sinner. That I knew before. But I am glad that you have found it out." Then in terse phrase he told me that Jesus was not the Saviour of good people, but of sinners, and only of those sinners who know their condition and were ready to make confession. This put the matter in a new light. It seems strange that I could have been so stupid that I did not see it that way before. I walked along quickened in every power of my mind and soul, and for the first time in my life saw Jesus as the Saviour and myself as the sinner brought together. I am sure that I had never heard that there was such a thing as logic in the world, and yet in my rude way I knocked up a little syllogism of my own which ran about thus: "Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners; I am a sinner, and therefore I know He will save me." These truths struck me with a new pleasure and a ray of light flickered through the darkness of my heart.

By this time we had passed a gate into the public road and were nearing the church.

"Do you know what to do to get Christ to save you?" inquired this plain but godly young farmer. I told him with unblushing candor that I had no idea what I ought to do. "You must have faith," he said. I told him that I had heard much about faith and about believing, but that somehow the words did not seem to bring me any light. I remember that I spoke with almost a despondent gloom, as if the whole thing was beyond me. My friend stopped abruptly in the road and told me to stop; pointing upward, he called my attention to a long, immense limb of a mountain oak which stretched across the road far above my head and he told me to look at that limb.

"Suppose," he said to me, "you were up on that limb; you would be afraid to leap off, would you not?" I told

him very emphatically that I would, and probably added that I would not think for a moment of doing such a thing.

"Look up there again," he said. "Suppose you were up there and I was to call you by name and tell you that if you would jump off I would catch you and not let you be hurt, would you do it?"

"No, sir," I said, rather doggedly, I fear; "I would not think of doing it."

"But," he asked, "if I told you outright that I would catch you as you fell, why would you not leap off?"

"Why, because," I said, a little afraid that I had wounded him, "why, because I cannot believe that you would have the power to catch me, or that you would even dare to try to catch me." I wondered how he would receive my emphatic reply.

"Why, that is it," he said; "you would not leap off because you would not believe that I could catch you, or that I would dare to try it; that would be unbelief."

"Is that unbelief?" I asked, with an unaffected surprise. "Is that all?" and my new tone evidently stirred his hope. "Yes, that is all," he said very hopeful. "That is unbelief, and it is that unbelief of our God which keeps His blessings back." At that moment I felt the guilt of not believing as I had not felt it before. I started forward, but he halted me.

"Look up at that limb again," he said. "Suppose you were up there; look up at it and suppose that Jesus Christ was down here in the road where we are and you knew that it was He and He should stretch out His arms and look up and call you by name and bid you leap into His arms, would you do it?"

I did not make quick reply. I thought the matter through and sounded the depths of my heart, and there arose in my soul a clear and gladsome conviction that I

would not be afraid to make the leap. I remember that I felt distinctly the wish that I could in that way attest my faith in the word and the power of Jesus. Turning to my good instructor I said to him, "Yes, sir, I could, and I gladly would." "Why," he said, "would you?"

"Because," I answered, "if He said He would catch me He would do what He said, and if He tried to catch me He is able to do what He tries."

"Why, boy," he replied in joyous strain, "that is faith in the Son of God." Then he went on to tell me that faith was taking the Lord at His word about my soul, just as taking Him at His word about my body would be.

We started on. The only question that I asked before we reached the door of the church was, "May I understand that if I move out just as I am, not waiting for any sort of change, but simply committing myself into the hands of Jesus Christ, will He save me?"

"He says so," said the man. Then we were at the church door and he told me to go in and he fell back and walked off. That night marked my entrance through the gate into the kingdom of God. I entered the church, an old quadrangular frame house—sealed and unpainted and unlighted except by a few flickering tallow candles hanging on the wall, and as yet with only a few people in the house. I sat down near to the pulpit, more than willing to be as near as possible to the children of light who already were fast coming in. I looked not at them; I had made progress and found myself face to face with the Saviour. He was at hand and was ready for me to come. I said with the dogmatism of a boy's faith, "I will give myself to Him; I will do it to-night; I will do it before I go out of this house; I will do it if I have to stay all night in this house in the dark and by myself and I will do it now." I did it there and then, did it actually and

did it once for all ; did it in such a way that it has never come undone ; did it once and forever.

As to what the effect of it would be I never thought and strangely enough did not seem to care ; the sense of the transfer was distinct and satisfactory. I had passed over into the hands of my Saviour by my own glad choice and I had His word that it would be all right and I sat still before God and felt that I was in a new world. Presently the singing commenced and there had never been quite such singing before ; the church filled up with people that I had known from my earliest years, but I must candidly say that they had a better look and I had a better feeling for them than ever before. There was no impulsive outbreak, no lack of self-mastery ; indeed I had never known such a peaceful and wondrous sense of self-mastery before. Immediately I looked around and about me and saw afresh the old doctor who had given me the hand and truly I felt that I could kiss his feet with grateful joy ; I caught a glimpse of old Father Harris, and if I had not been such an awkward and bashful lad I should have hugged his knees, and over among the singers I saw my grown-up brother, my double brother though they told me he was a half brother, and the sight of him was simply irresistible. The sermon was over now and they were singing and I got up and slipped through the tangled throng and went over and found just a little space between my brother and his next neighbor. I squeezed in, put my hand up on his tall shoulder and said, "Brother Henry, I have some good news for you ; I can trust in the Saviour." He said not a word but the tears came to his eyes and his great arm squeezed me to him until I felt I should die with the joy of it.

After the meeting he and I walked back through the forest and there was a light shining in the forest fairer and

softer than the silver radiance of the moon. When we reached home my father was in bed and my brother knocked at the door and went in and I heard him say, "Father, great news to-night, great news; your baby boy came into the kingdom of God."

III

SELF-DISCOVERY

A VAST mist of confusion hangs around what is usually spoken of as a ministerial call. There are some who make it an absolutely spiritual affair—a thing which God does directly and authoritatively. Others, differing from this view, see nothing in the conviction which puts a man into the ministry except what can be accounted for with the divine element left out. This is one more case in which the truth lies about midway between the extremes. It would rob the ministry of much of its dignity and about all of its authority to eliminate from it the voice of God. They who preach from preference or other supposed adaptation or for more human reasons can never speak with highest authority. They are likely enough in the long run to be played upon by other personal influences which may lift them out of the ministry and send them into pursuit of things more clearly in sight and more convincingly tangible.

On the other hand, there are those who are led to believe that the ministerial call is the living voice of God, that it must come with an overmastering voice or as an entrancing vision, looking in vain for what they think they must have or else stubbornly refusing the ministry. I heard the matter of a ministerial call set forth in a most dogmatic way and for several years I listened day and night to hear the peremptory and overwhelming summons from heaven to preach the Gospel. Of course I listened in vain.

Many influences, however, were continually playing

upon me. There were ministers who came into touch with me who gave me stirring impressions as to the preacher's life. They had a clean, manly, courtly bearing; their excellencies, their dignity, called forth my reverence and affection and their earnestness and eloquence moved me most powerfully. They had a noble indifference about certain things that charmed me. They opened up to me a life that built up fine men and furnished excellent motives. I do not recall a single word spoken to me by ministers about preaching the Gospel except by the venerable and saintly William Harris, and that was when I was very small. He was spending the night in our home, and the next morning, as he was led from the parlor through my father's chamber on his way to breakfast, he found me sitting at a window reading and he swung out of his course, touched my head with his fingers and expressed the hope that God would call me to preach the Gospel. After all, it is just possible that that single utterance, so mellow and gracious, from that extraordinary preacher-maker might have been the call of God which settled the question at the last. I think, too, of that old doctor who had the hand which he stretched out to me with offered help when I took my first step towards religion. He had a courteous kindness towards me. He always greeted me when I came near him according me a certain attention and respect to which I was unaccustomed and several times he would drop a word about the ministry, all of which had a direct influence which I never lost.

It came out in the talk of the family, also, that my mother, who died rather suddenly, spent much of her dying breath in praying that my brother Harvey and myself should be ministers. All these things in connection with my reading and my thought were so many heavenly winds that seemed to bear me onward and up-

ward towards the work which I could not see, but which it was always settled that I was to do. There came also quite a revival in our community—not in the usual shape of a protracted meeting, but expressing itself in neighborhood prayer-meetings, unusual services at the church, conversions here and there and much godly talk among the best Christians of the neighborhood. Into that courageous little movement I was brought. They called upon me to lead in prayer and I had a word or two with some of the boys who were in the church about our spiritual condition and what overmastered me with grateful wonder, I led a young man to the Saviour. Oh, those days of unworldly joy! The light of the Christian world shone round me with ineffable beauty.

To be candid about the matter, the greatest obstacle in the way of my entering the ministry was my irrepressible eagerness to do so. My soul cried out for the ministry; indeed, I quite lost patience with myself. It seemed preposterous, for such a one as I knew myself to be to have such a restless longing. I called it a carnal motive and branded it as a disqualification. I put it aside and set myself down to wait the coercive call of God. I hung up at this point for two or three years. Not entirely on this account but because I was so absolutely hedged in; I could not have undertaken to preach as I was then and there seemed to be no human outlook for my preparation for the ministry. My father was much limited in his means and yet more limited in his views of higher education and so for myself poverty was my meat and drink. I do not know that I had as much as one dollar for my own up to the time when I was seventeen years of age, and when a little after that I went out to teach, it was little that I made and less that I spent.

When I was nineteen years of age I went beyond the big mountains to teach school. I made an engagement

for a solid session of twelve months, for a consideration of three hundred dollars and my board for the year. It was truly into an ill-sorted family that my lot was cast. A beautiful and capable woman had married in her early youth and had a noble husband and a magnificent home. Later on she was made a widow by the untimely death of her good man and left with five children,—orderly, sensible, lovely children. There came along a widower, colossal of frame, a murderer of grammar, an incarnation of bad manners, a fortune hunter, and one of those inexplicable infatuations, which sometimes overtake the noblest of women, brought on an ill-fated marriage. I ought to add that the uncouth widower, later on the husband, imported his domestic stock in the shape of three as incorrigible youngsters as could be found on any road and added them to the newly made family. A few weeks after that alliance, I went into that family as a teacher. A few outside children were added to my constituency and I started in to do my twelve months' work. That woman, so fatefully allied with this man and so soon awakened to the incompatibilities of the situation, was at once a diplomat and a martyr in my eyes. A queen in form and bearing, she adroitly covered the rigors and coarseness of her spouse and filled the home with a warmth and light that almost brought unity and safety there. I think of her always with a reverence and an admiration in no degree diminished by the blunder of her infatuation.

Things moved along without change from December till July and I fell somewhat seriously ill. I was ordered to the Springs—rather an inaccessible place in the mountains not far off, and I was kept there for several weeks. One day I was sitting in a little park about the Springs and a gentleman and his wife from Richmond, Va., came over and sat down by me and we entered into conversa-

tion. A choice pair they proved to be, beneficent, large-souled—and by some means they induced me to confess my secret hope as to the Christian ministry. They talked with sympathetic enthusiasm and when I told them of my hopeless limitations it only whetted their interest. They made haste to tell me of Richmond College, but lately established, by my own denomination of which they were members, and they told me of the exceedingly moderate terms and certain help vouchsafed to ministerial students, and advised me to write to the president of the college. All this I did with misgivings, for my heart beat when I thought of the audacity of what I was doing.

In a few days I returned to my school which now became an element in my way, as I was committed for five months of additional work. Nothing came from the president of the college and I fell into the humdrum of my little school. Quickly enough I discovered that total depravity was a growing feature in the incorrigible three and by vast leaps and jumps in number one of that three. He was about fourteen years of age and had about him some of the colossal symptoms of his father. I took him apart and delivered a sage and admonitory lecture and closed by a distinct promise of the rod if he leaped the boundaries any more. In a little while his transgressions, bald, open, and daring, faced me. I had already provided myself with a gum switch of rather formidable dimensions, and candor compels me to say that the dust and lint bore ample testimony to the energy of my performance. That evening I returned to the house of the discordant elements and went up to my room. Presently I heard thundering steps on the stairway and my gigantic proprietor lunged into my room. He was panting with rage and breathing threats of the direst sort. He burst into venomous speech—confused, broken

and furious, with the vengeful inquiry as to why I had punished his boy, also indicating that he would probably drop me out at the window. I confess that my life was not at its best at that moment for I felt as helpless as if a cyclone had struck the house and was about to crush it into ruins. I did manage to tell him that I had chastised his boy only after long provocation and as a last hope of managing him. After saying that much I found my speech fully come back to me and I told him that I judged from his mood that he was not willing for me to use such methods as I deemed necessary in order to preserve the order of the school, and that if such was the case, it would be better for me not to continue the school. I had already taught seven months and I had not received one cent of compensation. I suggested that he settle with me and that the school close at once. I told him that I would not trouble him with entertainment over night. I packed my trunk and went to his wife's sister's, where I was most hospitably entertained. The next morning he sent me more money than I had ever had in all my life at one time, and putting it with a little that I already had, I saw the college looming up for the first time in possible reach. I passed the post-office next day on my way to the train and found a letter from the president of the college and he told me to come on. I crossed the great mountains, returning to my native Bedford, and almost the first thing that I heard upon my arrival was that my brother had also determined to enter the ministry. In the smallest while it was decided that he and I divide my little pile and go to college together—undoubtedly the happiest incident that up to that time had ever occurred in my life.

This is the way it happened. Since it became possible for me to get ready to preach I found myself filled with a conviction of my duty to preach so powerful and so over-

mastering and so adequate that I have never for one moment since that time doubted that I was called to preach the Gospel. At all times I have felt insufficient and unfit and all unworthy. The outcome of my ministry has always been unsatisfactory, and yet so much richer than I ever dreamed beforehand that it could be that I have filled the way with my grateful songs. These words are written when I have almost attained the end of my seventy-fifth year when I might, possibly without infringing the truth, say that I could not find many regrets in quitting this world except the unutterable regret of having to end my task on earth as the servant of the greatest Master whose goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.

It may be well for me to add two or three incidents connected with my ministry. In the course of years I became the pastor of the Grace Street Baptist Church of Richmond, Va., and on a certain occasion it became necessary for me to make an appeal for money to assist my alma mater in caring for the indigent ministerial students. This led me to preach on the Drama of the Axe, taking for my subject "The Building of Elisha's Theological Seminary"; in which one of the students worked with a borrowed axe and worked with such energy at his task that the axe flew its helve and sank into the bottom of the river. I spoke of the fellow's determination to cleave his way; of the kindness of his teacher to whom he went in his distress, and of the divine interposition by which he recovered the axe. Then I told of the sick young man who went to the Springs, of the noble Christian gentleman and lady who stole his secret and helped him to go to college, and finally closed by saying to the church, "It may be worth something for you to know that that man and woman who engaged in conversation with that young man were members of this church, and

that the young man whom they helped is standing before you in the person of your pastor, and comes to plead that you will help in the good work of aiding those young men whom God has called into the ministry." I cannot say that this second personal fact that I mentioned had anything to do with it, but it is pleasant to remember that when we counted up the collection we had quite eclipsed all the offerings the church had ever made to ministerial education.

For twenty-six years I was president of the Educational Society which looked after ministerial students in Richmond College. With few exceptions I corresponded with these boys and interviewed many cases personally before they reached the college, and it was my official duty to handle the personal examination to which they were subjected before they were admitted to the benefits of the Education Board. The most eminent member of that Board kept up with all of those ministerial students after they left college, he himself being a college president, and his testimony was that nineteen-twentieths of these young men entered the active work of the ministry, and that those who received temporary help and afterwards entered other professions, returned the money, which had been expended in their behalf. One of the largest joys of my life was to be the pastor and private counsellor of these young men. There were hundreds of them. I found that in the majority of cases the young men did not have a natural or definite religious preference for the ministry but felt such a pressure of duty that they were constrained to preach, but this fact in no degree diminished their ardor or crippled their power. I was struck with the vast diversities, tastes, and adaptabilities manifested in this great body of men. The living miracle of Christianity is what we sometimes call the self-perpetuating power of the ministry.

IV

TRAINING FOR ACTION

FOUR years in college was all the experience that I had in winning the higher education. True it was, I had the exceeding good fortune to get into what was called, in ante-bellum times, a choice classical school and remained in it for three years. That set me forward in all branches of study except mathematics. Unluckily the teacher was feeble in mathematics—a distinct consolation to me, for from my cradle I abhorred numbers from the multiplication table up, and the incompetency of that teacher in a way legalized my stupidity and confirmed it.

My brother was older than myself and great on mathematics. I discovered with grudging and resentment that he had much more gumption in that respect than I had, and what irritated me still more about it was that he had a scorn almost as heartless and frigid as mathematics itself for my incapacity. I failed egregiously in my third year and my brother said things to me about it that brought me to a white heat, and I told him that the next year, merely to show my contempt for mathematics and for those who liked it, I intended to whip him on his own field. This is exactly what I did but was too proud to be vain about it, and my triumph was sensibly abated by the fact that my brother had an overwhelming ticket and I had very little to do. It did the unsanctified portions of my being, which included about everything there was of me, a world of good that I had downed him. But I studied my very best to look as if it was a thing which

might happen any time, and had to come from the very necessities of the case, but I was exceedingly secretive as to the fact that I had used up all my reservation of vitality in the struggle.

My brother and I were not very closely akin. We belonged unmistakably to different families; he was a Hatcher, from back in the primitive days of Careby in England; I had taken my little heritage and outfit from the Lathams. I naturally liked what he did not like, and he looked down upon me from an extra three inches in altitude with a haughtiness that smacked of contempt. He was a sport; his temperament, his physical make-up and his habits sent him afield. A horse was his glory, a dog was his companion, a gun was the triumph of all mechanism in his sight; game, from the deer to the quail, commanded his tireless pursuit. In fact, I had frankly to admit that he could kill more game with rocks than I could possibly kill with a double-barrelled gun. The chase set him wild; the cry of the pack, no matter whose it was, broke him from everything else and he would follow the dogs through the day and far into the dead of the night. During one of our vacations he had some soreness about his feet and his physician had ordered him into retirement and required him to leave off his shoes. One day while scantily dressed, and his feet entirely uncovered, there came in sight a fox, hard-pressed by the hounds. When my brother came to himself he was four miles from home, in the midst of the most fashionable and aristocratic part of our larger community, without collar or vest and with his feet bare of everything else except cuts and wounds, and blood and dirt. And he declared that it looked as if that fox selected that place to surrender in order that the very pride and pick of the country should see him in his unpardonable plight. But little he cared. Had he not

had a full hour of enchanting sport? Had he not scaled mountains, plunged through rivers and been about the first man at the finish? As for myself, I grieve now that I hated dogs so thoroughly and hated them for my brother's sake. I never came to the point of hating him, but I hold him responsible for the bulk of my boyish unhappiness. He was my only companion, and it was a choice between solitude at home and fatigue, scratches, torn clothes, burdens of game and ill-humor and my brother. In fact, he was the bigger of the two and I had to go, though I kept him as sorry that I did go as my contrary grumbles and antagonisms made possible. After all, our chief point of identity seemed to be our temperamental difference. I know that he was interesting to me as a natural curiosity; my wonder never ceased that a boy could be so unlike what I thought a boy ought to be. It somewhat justifies these criticisms for me to say that the members of the family largely supported me in my contentions with my brother. They always said that I was the better boy, but it nettled me unutterably to note their superior respect for him. He always did a thing, no matter what the thing, in a stunning sort of way. Even his conversion was exceedingly eccentric and mysterious. There was a meeting in progress at a Methodist church miles away, and he walked out and defiantly announced that he was going to that meeting. It did not at all suit for him to go to that meeting. The horse that he said he would ride was sorely needed for another very important purpose, and there was an act of domestic charity and sacrifice which he was urged to perform. He put his foot down with a thud that almost made the hinges rattle on the doors and said that he would not do it. He dressed himself up in a morose and sullen manner, strode out of the house, as if he were leaving Sodom and Gomorrah, mounted the horse, whacked

him with a switch and loped off, leaving a disgruntled and sorely perplexed household. They wondered what was the matter with him, anyway, and I think, although they did not call it by that name, they united in the belief that it was an extreme case of demoniacal possession. That evening he trotted up to the horse-rack very placidly, looking as innocent and far more amiable than the average new-born babe, and dashed over the horse-block into the yard and announced that he was converted. The news did not command enthusiasm—the hostile humor of the morning still held sway and the members of the family conferred together in an undertone and revealed the fact that they were gravely skeptical as to how it could be possible for the bad fellow of the morning to be the trustworthy convert of the afternoon.

But the dear fellow ! Rough, uncouth, hard to explain he still was. It took religion quite a while to get in its work on him. He was selfish, wholly exclusive at times, and my boyish soul peeped out at him, scanned him, measured him, suspected him, was often grieved by him, but by careful study I came to believe that if his religion was not always agreeable, it was tenacious, genuine and greatly improving.

We cultivated our differences, however, did some quarrelling almost every day and slept together that night. That classical school of which I have spoken put me in far better shape for college than my brother was, and although I was the younger, I was almost a year ahead of him in our college work. We also had in that school a literary society that gave me a little lift in public speaking, and when I went out to teach I got into several rude and yet useful debating societies which helped to knock me into some crude shape for appearing on the platform.

Not so with my brother. He was twenty-two years

old when he went to college, and the only public speaking that he had ever done was in the shape of calls, yells and shouts to his pack of hounds when he was afield, mad with sport and wild with the sportsman's joy. We entered the literary society at college, and I must say that of all the young men I have ever known, my brother had the most tragical and humiliating experiences in his attempt at public speaking. In his early efforts, his mouth shut up with the deadly tightness of a steel trap, and after standing entirely too long in the futile effort to get it open, tramped back to his seat with a shame that would have been ruinous if it had not been amusing. After a while he grew brave enough to write a speech and committed it until he could sit down in a chair and say it backwards. When he came to the society and his name was called, he stepped alertly to the platform and struck the first sentence, but never got through it. There he stood, making repeated efforts for another start and crashing into disaster every time. After much delay and with a look more of defiant purpose than of failure, he sat down. They put him on again, and this time he determined to prepare his address and read it, and he answered the call summoning him to the platform. Actually he lost his eyesight; try as he would, he could not read the thing, but he pegged and fretted and broke down every time. I am not sure that I would have been surprised if he had walked up and knocked the president out of the chair; not that the president had not treated him well, but he was so indignant, so rebellious and so unhappy. Indeed, I believe that he had all the feelings that a bashful boy is heir to, except the feeling in favor of quitting. That night he said, "If they ever put me up again I will not commit it to memory; I will not write it; I will not read it; I am going to think it out and trust to my memory to make things hum." The

time came and he had every item of his schedule in good order, and then went absolutely to wreck again. It is literally true that this went on with one bare and possible exception for four years. He did it passably well in his last year once or twice. He stood high in his graduating class. There were only six, and it was the law that every one should deliver his graduating address, but that was one time when my brother got the unanimous vote of the faculty that he should be excused from delivering his graduating address.

While on our return home from college with our diplomas in hand, my brother well-nigh broke my heart. "Of all the men in the world," he said pathetically, "I think my case is the most peculiar and inexplicable. The Lord requires me to do a thing that is physically impossible for me to do. That I have got to preach the Gospel is just as certain to my mind as my existence is. On that point my mind does not waver and for four years I have sought as best I could to acquire the habit and art of public speaking but I have failed always and beyond all measure. Here I am with my diploma, twenty-six years old and all my teachers and all of my fellow students, while liking me as much as I deserve, count it a hoax and a joke that I should believe that I have got to preach. And I have ; I know I have, but what to do next, to save my life, I cannot tell."

There was an appeal in it that brought him into my soul ; by this I had learned greatly to respect him and in that moment my heart melted in a great embracing, sympathetic love that grew from that time till the end. I finally told him that I would ask our father to give him some money and with it he must start into the mountainous regions of Virginia, carrying no letters, no recommendations but telling the people as he went along the facts in the case, and if there was a prayer-meeting, to go

to it and speak or fail, as the case might be. He adopted the suggestion on the spot, to which our father acquiesced in a most cheerful manner. It was agreed that if a school-house or a church or even a private home invited him to speak he should make the trial. If his effort proved unacceptable, he should quietly bow himself out and plunge forth in pursuit of another invitation, or if the impression made was sufficiently favorable to call for another appointment he was to remain as long as the hospitality of the occasion held out. It was a novel experiment and seemed to promise the laceration of his nerves—except that he had no nerves, simply *nerve*. There was an obstinacy in his nature which not only endured but seemed to revel in opposition and he went out on his unparalleled expedition without apparent misgiving and with the do or die spirit within him. It was a finishing school of the peripatetic order; its schedule named no locations and bade him go forth to find them; it admitted many failures but no disasters and the closing of the campaign would not come until he had caught the trick of the public platform. About six months were consumed in this hard and memorable expedition and he came back a conqueror, ungarlanded, but with the consciousness that he was ready for business.

It waits to be said that my brother became an exceedingly fluent, ready, self-possessed and humorous public speaker. He was pastor for quite many years but he was too blunt and outspoken for the pastorate. The bulk of his life was spent in agency work under the boards and societies of his denomination. He travelled through the South for many years, speaking continually at popular gatherings, preaching almost every Sunday and frequently during the week. He brought the things of the kingdom to great assemblages and on distinguished occasions but his tongue never rolled up, never hesitated. His

last day on earth was the Sabbath in one of the seaboard towns of the South and it was testified by many that his sermon in the morning was rich with resonance and in a voice that carried with the sibilant ring of youth. His sermon left an imperishable impression and before the sun went down, his eyes had seen the light of the everlasting hills.

In the long run of life this brother of mine was my steadfast and inspiring friend. We were brought into the strongest intimacies during a part of our lives, and though he lived out of Virginia, his comradeship by correspondence and frequent meetings was manna to my soul. While his engagements committed him to travel he was an ardent lover of his home. It was a joke he relished much that during the Civil War he was accounted one of the most denunciatory and vindictive sort of men towards the North. He said things he ought not to have said, though I believe it was more in the brusqueness of his manner and in his youthful love of exaggeration than in real bitterness of soul. Years after the civil strife was over he married a New England woman. It would have been hard to find a more courtly, affectionate, demonstrative husband than he was. He was a widower at the time of this marriage and had three strong and gifted children. That New England woman, lovely of person, gifted and highly trained, not only made for him a most appreciative and helpful wife but she became the idol of the children, and after he was taken away, though tempted by her kindred to return to them, she lived with these children who gave to her every dollar of their father's possessions, and outside of that, maintained her in handsome style till her end came.

I must be pardoned for reviving the pleasant memory that when my brother attained his threescore years and ten I had the honor of bringing him to my country seat,

Careby Hall, in Virginia, and of having a modest full week's house party in his honor. His kindred and old time friends were brought from many directions and it was a jubilant, reminiscent and a gloriously serious time withal.

I can hardly say that I have missed him for there was a penetrative quality in his personality which outlived him and he is about as much to me this night as I write these lines as he was in the full prime of his manhood.

I did not suffer with the halting speech that so long crippled my brother. In fact, he and our blunt-spoken kinsman, Dr. J. B. Jeter, who also sometimes broke down through the treacherous lapse of his memory, told me very frankly that in their judgment my tongue ran by some hidden mechanical force which operated quite outside of my brain and that I could talk as glibly when I had nothing worthy of saying as many a sensible man could when he was charged with a brainful message. I took my punishment without open rebellion and kept my opinions to myself.

I think I can truthfully say that no young man ever mussed up the early part of his ministry in a more pitiless fashion than I did. My first pretense at a sermon was at a revival meeting which a young man, recently clerk in a country store and who had had one year at school, was conducting. He preached his two or three sermonettes several times over and as I dropped in and he did not wish to go over them again, he put me up. I talked; my tongue rattled and on that occasion at least, I am sure that my lingual activities had little to do with either my head or my heart and nothing to do with the heads and hearts of the other people. The only thing that I ever heard from the sermon was as I walked out into the shadows of the night. A gruff mountaineer standing too far off to recognize me declared that "he

had done got a fa'r night's sleep while that feller was talkin','' I being that selfsame crumpled and shattered fellow. The president of our college was the pastor of the first African church in Richmond and it was intimated that the old gentleman sent the raw material down for the practice that they could get in speaking to their colored brethren. He tried me once and the way in which I tried the people effectually cut off any further practice on my part. I was asked also as the last on the list to speak at a mission and my text and I had a misunderstanding at the start and were never on speaking terms afterwards.

On my return to my Bedford home at the end of the second session, a kindly old kinsman invited me to spend a Sunday with him and let him see what I could do on Sunday. I stayed over and he saw, and it was forty years before I was invited to that pulpit again. That rare, enchanting thing which ministers speak of as "liberty" never once came my way in those early efforts; indeed, I was only twenty-two years of age, rude and unfit, and ought to have shown my gumption by my silence, but it takes more gumption to produce silence than I had in stock at that time. But the dawn of liberty came at last. It was sweet as the grapes of Eschol; it had in it the very wines of the celestial kingdom and put a new light on life and a new peace in my heart. Father Harris was the pastor of the Suck Spring church distant from my home about seven or eight miles. It was his custom to begin his annual revival at the church on the first Sunday in August, and finding it necessary to be elsewhere on that day and finding it impossible to secure a fitter supply for his pulpit, he invited me to take the place. I had time for preparation so I conned over my text, walked it in the woods, combed out the tangles of my thoughts, went on my knees about it, and then with

many dreads and with enough awkwardness to enliven a circus I went to the appointment. For one thing it was country people in front of me and there were mixed into the assembly many men whom I knew and some of my old schoolmates. They looked at me with a friendly and understanding gaze. They sang those fine old revival songs of those primitive days; my text was, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, etc.," and I felt the beauty and the power of my Lord's words as I uttered them, and they awakened such fires in the centre of my being as had never touched me before. A rude, ill-jointed sermon I know it was, and only by a strain of charity could it be called a sermon at all, but it opened before me such a flame of light that I had things to say—hot, stirring, Bible things. More than once my face ran with tears and my voice broke,—not with confusion, but in tenderness and feeling. The service ended, and I held back and hardly ventured to mix with the people. As soon as I could I mounted my horse and turned my face homeward and during that ride the first two appreciative things were said to me whose ring of sincerity touched my heart. A fine old gentleman of the church, stately and dignified, claimed me for dinner and as he rode along, he said with choking voice, "How I wish my boys could have gotten in to-day, and could have heard you; I think they could not have resisted it." His boys were my classmates, Jesse, John, Robert, and it went through me that this man for whom I had such respect had seen something in me and it kindled in me a happy hope that I might help him in bringing them into the kingdom of God. It was no compliment, it was a gracious admission that gave me a hint that after all the power of God might work through me.

On the road we were overtaken by another man who proved to be one of my old teachers when I was a small

boy and the three of us jogged along together. The question was started as to who was to conduct the meetings, and no one seemed to know. My old teacher, who was a Methodist, said to the deacon, in a warm, paternal tone, "If you could get this boy, my old schoolboy, to do the preaching and he would tell that story as he told it to-day, we would have a great revival." Ah, it was glorious to have my old teacher say a word so bravely kind about the dull and common boy that he knew me to be, and who strove so faithfully when I was at the beginning of my task to inspire in me a passion for knowledge. I went home with my soul hot with solemn and heavenly musings. I had at last one taste of ministerial joy; it touched me far too deeply to kindle in me one flicker of self-conceit. It brought me too near to the invisible things of the kingdom to let me think that I was anybody.

Several days afterwards I got a message from the old pastor to come up the next day and help him in the meeting. It gave me palpitation of the heart. I had to walk out and let the wind blow on me to keep from shouting. It was the first time that anybody had indicated a willingness to try me a second time. I thought truly my great Master had whispered to me that the joy that I had felt on Sunday would come back to me when I took up the work again. The next day after this invitation came, it rained and the clouds hung heavy. I had misgivings that the meetings would not recover from the effects of that freshet but the clouds broke. All that stormy day I worked on a sermon, thinking part of the time, speaking part of the time and praying about all of the time. The next morning there was not a cloud in the sky and away I rode.

All of my sermons put together would not have numbered over six or seven and all that I knew

about them was that I had failed disastrously on every one of them except one. I took them along, and some notes that I had picked up here and there, in connection with texts and hoped that I might splice out my stock till the meeting closed at the end of the week. It lasted nearly four weeks and while several other ministers were there, for a day or so, and the old pastor came in for several days each week, the burden of the talking came upon me, and some one who had never heard of homiletics and would never have known theology if it had called to stay all night with him, declared after the meeting was over, that I made two sermons a day and preached them and did all the talking to the mourners and converts, of which there were a great many. During all that memorable time I went from house to house among the brethren, many of them exceedingly plain, even rude, and living in small houses in the mountain hollows or scattered up and down the neighboring stream. They were good to me and loved me and some of them sought to make a greater fool of me than I already was by trying to tell me that I was wasting my time by not going into the ministry at once, for I had education enough. Before I left there I attended the baptism and saw besides many, many women, and ever so many boys, a long string of men, strong, successful, influential men, come forth to be enrolled as the newly saved children of the King.

I have thus extensively described this experience because its light was shed round the gateway of my ministry, and when I look back, I feel that it was there that the Lord met me and blessed me and started me.

At this time I had two years more in college and practically two more vacations, and this time was given to meetings in the scattered and mountainous places. They were the only places that wanted me and I knew

well enough that in my limited preparation I was fit for nothing else and only partially so for that, but those were profitable and enchanting days. My feet would walk me around the world if by that I could be brought to those buoyant, radiant, ineffable experiences. Odd things, laughable and ridiculous sometimes occurred and often marred the services, but the power of God was wonderful and I saw such tokens of the grace and glory of the kingdom that it braced me for the more than fifty years that I have been in the ministry.

One thing occurred during my third vacation which I did not desire and which I found myself unable to prevent. That affable and gentlemanly old deacon whose offered hand gave me strength to take my first step towards the kingdom of God, and who watched over me with a shepherd's care, made a motion in the church meeting calling for my ordination. I made my protest against it; my judgment truly disapproved it, but I was overborne. For my part, I do not favor the ordaining of raw and unseasoned youths. It often puts folly into their heads and rarely, if ever, puts grace into their souls, and the saving fact of my case was that while hands were laid upon me and I did feel it an honor to be a minister, I did most honestly feel that it ought not to be done. It amounted to nothing, and it would have been far more impressive to me if it had come later.

It would be pleasant but not edifying, I fear, to multiply incidents of those ardent and happy times. It must be allowed, however, for me to close this chapter on the ministerial experiences of my college days by one instance of divine power which deserves to be told in every language and in every land on the earth.

Near the end of my senior year in college we had a singular revival. It was apparently without any human explanation. The president of our college, who had not

gotten into the religious life of the college, and who did not get into the meetings until the revival fires were spreading with uncontrollable rapidity, said, when he did come in, in a somewhat perfunctory manner, that this was distinctly the Lord's business—indeed, a performance of heavenly sovereignty, since no one had expected or worked for the meeting. He did not know that a band of devout students, alarmed at the worldliness of the boys and touched with solemn fear, entered into a compact to pray for better things. Oh, the joy of that meeting! It was conducted exclusively by the students. They selected one or two of the young men to conduct the services. It was just such a revival as comes now and then to a Christian college. It hits material so fresh, so responsive and so powerful, and kindles the young spirit of the school into an exultant and irrepressible enthusiasm. The memories of that meeting would make a book, and rarely ever do they come back without opening the fountains of my soul. The services were held in the chapel, an hour in the day and an hour at night. Personal and associated prayers could be heard day and night in the dormitories. The town boys fought shy and practically organized to resist the spiritual things of the hour. There was one quite colossal fellow, enormously colossal in his talk, bristling with bravado and insolently boastful of his power to withstand all influences. A brilliant and captivating lad of the city was invited to the meeting and he told this boaster about the invitation, and said that he would come, but he did not believe it would be possible for him to resist the appeals of the boys and of his own conscience. This prompted the haughty scoffer to announce that all city students who chose to attend the meeting might meet him at a certain corner on the following evening and he would bring them to the meeting in a body and stand between them and danger. It was

quite a trooping gang that filed in that night under his leadership. That was a night of heaven's right hand and it brought a shivering sensation when that large crowd herded in with such seeming indifference. It fell to me to lead the meeting that night and I was almost abashed by the fierce and determined air of this city contingent. After my remarks I called for those who desired to take the stand for Christ and scarcely had I framed the invitation into words when that notorious fellow, ahead of all the others, started forward from the rear of the room. It was an incident of extraordinary moment. The invitation needed no repetition. The slain of the Lord lay thick and that was the epochal night of the meeting, and of the lives of not a few of these young men. There was a strain of eccentricity in the character of this leader and it showed itself at every point. When asked why he surrendered so suddenly, he said, "When I got my boys to the door of the chapel, they were praying on the inside and I never heard such praying before. It went all over me and through me and the first thing I knew I was crying and I used all my arts to hide it and thought I was safe when I went thundering into the room, but it was not long before I found that my resistance was gone and it was settled that I must go. I had led those boys up there in a bad way and I felt that it was my duty to lead them into that better way into which I decided so suddenly to enter." He had a bitter time getting to the light and peace of the Gospel. Indeed, he went so far as to say with gloomy candor that it did not look to him as if things were working out in an altogether fair way—that he believed in the miller's rule, "first come, first serve," but that all those fellows that came after him were rejoicing in the light and he was still stumbling in the dark. He went to our excellent president and told him that he had selected him as his ideal Christian and

that he was going to set it as his mark that he was going to be like him, and when he got that far, he would cease to strive, for he felt that the old doctor was just about as good as he ever cared to be. In God's good time, however, after days of perplexed and sorrowful inquiry, he saw the light and it looked as if we would never see the last of it. He had a word for everybody and a very peculiar one for the president. He took back his declaration that he was going to form his life according to the pattern shown him in the good life of our president, Dr. Robert Ryland, and said that since he had gotten a glimpse of Jesus of Nazareth, he felt that he must give himself to the struggle of being like Him.

I may add that the brilliant boy spoken of above was one of the converts. Oh, what a lovely, gifted boy he was! He walked off with the honors of the college three years later in the early part of his seventeenth year and a year later he spent the night with me, in which he told me how repulsive the military life appeared to him. He was born for scholarship and gloried in books, but he said to me over and over again that night that a boy can never be a man unless he at the same time be a patriot. He said that for him to hide in a bomb-proof was to throw away his self-respect and to dwindle into a traitor. It cut me all to pieces to see a youth so chivalric and so enslaved by duty and yet so enthusiastic in doing the distasteful thing because his better self said so. Oh, my glorified brother! In the first battle into which he went and stood without a tremor and served his battery until a bullet, as if searching for the noblest, cut through his heart. With the simple words, "Oh, my mother, my mother!" he lay dead upon the field. But the memory of that boy has been an evangel singing among our college comrades, a battle-song of duty and faithfulness and heaven. It added much to the seriousness of my life

that so many of my college chums and not a few of the converts of that meeting afterwards finished their careers on the battle-fields or in the hospitals of that war, so mysterious in its coming, so destructive in its progress, so far-reaching in its purpose, and yet so gracious and so pacific and so fraternal and so patriotic in its outcome.

I had at this time a classmate who, though very worldly, commanded my respect and my heart. We often studied together and had many of our pleasures and occupations largely in common. He eschewed the meeting and seemed to avoid me. I confess that I was afraid to approach him : indeed all of the Christian students agreed that he was not accessible. Meanwhile our concern for him was intense, and we often conferred about his case.

One night I saw him slip hurriedly and stealthily into the chapel and shrink into the back bench. As soon as the service ended, he escaped from the room as if pursued by the avenger. It was so that in ascending to my room on the third floor of the dormitory I had to pass his door. It fastened into my heart that I ought to be more faithful, and I almost grew sick with dread lest if I approached him he might repel me. When I came to his door it stood slightly ajar, and I pushed it open and walked in. I found him sitting alone, by his table, and with his face resting in his hands. Walking up to him and laying my hand upon his shoulder I said, "Pardon me, Joe, but I must speak to you. The dread of offending you must not hold me back any longer. You know my love for you, and I would have you know my desire for your salvation." As I spoke I felt the quiver of his frame. "I thank you for speaking to me," he said with deep emotion. "It is what I have needed, for of all men on the earth to-night I must surely be the most miserable. You said something in the meeting to-night that pierced

my heart like a dagger. I have a vow upon me, made out of my love for my father six years ago, when I was a boy of fourteen. And now my father is dead, my vow is broken, and I fear that my soul is lost."

"Not lost beyond hope," I quickly replied. "Follow the bent of your vow and it may lead you to salvation. Everything depends upon what you do with your vow. What will you do?"

He sprang to his feet and turning his tearful gaze upon me said: "If you will tell me how, and God will hear the prayer of a vow-breaker, I will from this night pay this vow."

His roommate was not a Christian and was at that moment studying in another room. He requested me to go after him, and in a little while I returned with the youth.

"Wythe," the young man said to his roommate, "I have determined to seek the salvation of my soul, and I would like you to go with me." The fair and comely lad did not hesitate, and the two agreed that they would enter the kingdom of God, if only the gate could be found open. He afterwards became Dr. H. Wythe Davis, the eminent physician of Richmond, Va.

I went out and found a few devout and congenial young men, and we spent an hour or two with these two inquirers after the Way. We had choice passages of the Bible read by one and another; some told in simple phrase of the steps by which they entered into the kingdom of God. Now and then a song or two was sung and several prayers full of boyish ardor and sympathy were made. No effort I think was made to hasten a confession of faith. Towards midnight, the group dispersed, but each went his way to pray for this scholarly young student and his boyish and beautiful roommate.

Next morning as I was dressing, I heard the noise of

fleet feet coming down my hall. A sudden halt and a violent turning of the bolt, and in sprang Turner. He looked a new creature from top to bottom ; radiant as a spring morning he bounded into my open arms and exclaimed : " Last night of all men most miserable, I must be this morning of all men most favored and happy. My vow is paid, my sins I believe are forgiven, and my life, no longer my own, is given to Him who gave Himself for me."

That was the brilliant and accomplished Joseph A. Turner, a teacher of rare abilities, a writer whose charming stories adorned some of our best magazines, and whose Christian character was the admiration of all who knew him. Valiant friend of my Lord ! Years ago he finished his course.

V

GOING AT IT

AT this point,—if any one should ever get this far, —the reader must sacrifice his feelings to the extent of reading two or three paragraphs of personal history of freely confessed dullness. In June, 1858, I received my diploma from Richmond College, made my graduating address on “The Greatness of the Graduate,” accepted a call to Manchester, Va., and a few days afterwards became twenty-four years old. I had no theological education, no library, no money, no sermons, no pastoral experience and probably no business in accepting the charge of a church. The Manchester of that day was not the Manchester of to-day. It was a cotton factory town, an object of supreme contempt with the Richmond people, with unpaved and unlighted streets, with only one church, and that a discordant and unprogressive Methodist church. The town was noted for the improvidence of its men, the hard life of the factory boys and girls, the lack of public spirit, the alarming amount of drunkenness and the multitude of loafers and gamblers, and the prevalence of ungodliness in many of its grossest forms. Two attempts had been made to start churches of our denomination and both had come to naught. In some way I had picked up a positively malicious prejudice against the town, and when I was in a mood to make bad wishes about anybody, I wished that they might have to live in Manchester. When they first started the third movement for a Baptist church I was in my third year at college, and for the lack of some one better they pulled me

over there several Sunday mornings to make such a noise in the pulpit as my powers would justify. They were worshipping, or at least meeting in a dismal and ill-kept hall. They gave me no compensation for my services, most of the time let me come over three miles from the college on foot, paying my own toll, giving me no dinner, and letting me go back to college too late for dinner there. One hard-faced and loquacious old fellow walked with me as far as his own house, deliberately entered his gate, securely shut it and then bucked up against it with marked decision and asked me in a non-committal tone, and without the mention of dinner, whether I would come in. Invariably I would not and I tramped back to college empty of most everything except some resentful thoughts of Manchester. A little more than a year after that I was shocked into a tremor by a message that a committee from Manchester wished to see me the next afternoon at six o'clock. Horribile Dictu! I revolted and yet collapsed under an instant apprehension that I was to begin my active life by becoming pastor in the town which of all others on this terrestrial globe was the most distasteful and dismal to me. It turned out just that way, and though I had several attractive country fields open to me, under the power of a conviction stronger than my own life, I found myself in no great while, even before my graduation, engaged to be the pastor of the Manchester Baptist Church.

Be it said that upon inspection I found things signally improved in shape since my hard lot as pulpit supply some time before that. They had called a young and attractive university student, who came to them on the first Sunday of that year, and under his leadership things had quickened up surprisingly. A \$10,000 house of worship was in process of building and completed far enough to hold worship in the basement. Several interesting

men with their families had joined in the new organization, and two or three great-hearted Richmond Baptists had agreed to come over every Sunday and help in the Sunday-school. They were greatly charmed with their young pastor and things moved off gloriously, but at the end of three months death claimed the young preacher and left the sheep stricken and without a shepherd. These new signs of life gave refreshment to my spirit and my sense of duty knocked my puerile prejudices out of existence, and before I knew it I found it the choice and pride of my life to be the pastor of the little Manchester church. The awe-inspiring president of the college ripped me up without mercy for accepting the call, assured me that the worst disasters were ahead of me and distinctly hinted to me that my greatness consisted only in my folly. Not even his relentless upbraidings awoke in me one doubt as to my duty to take up the work in Manchester.

Think not that I found a bed of roses. My first discovery was that the church building was to cost \$10,000, that \$7,000 of the work had already been done, that only \$1,500 had been paid on the debt, that the rest of the debt was far past due and that the contractors were becoming troublesome and also that it would require \$3,000 to finish the church. There was next to no money in the church and as yet no cohesive or coöperative enthusiasm in the body. I never had taken a collection for anything, and hardly knew that collections were taken for anything. I had the country look stamped deep upon me, knew very few people in Richmond and next to nobody anywhere else. There never was a greener, nor more helpless human thing than I seemed to myself to be. Nothing but a miracle could save the situation and the miracle came. I preached my first clumsy and lumbering little sermon on the fourth Sunday in August, 1858,

chiefly to a new lot of well-behaved empty benches, and then went out of town for a week. The next Sunday I tried it again. The weather was hot, most of the benches still empty, and my utterance was feeble and despondent. That week I took myself out for a private interview, and myself and I went over the situation and agreed that it was grim and that my incompetency was grimmer. We finally got together,—that is, I and myself, and passed one resolution, that we would go in with both hands and both feet, with heart and soul, day and night, praying all the time, and would work one solid year, though it should be on empty benches, though there was not a conversion, not a visible tear, not a sign nor symptom of interest or progress during all the time.

I felt better. I had settled in Manchester and, in a way, was ready for business. I went to prayer-meeting on Friday night,—the first which I had attended, and the attendance was sensibly larger. My soul picked up a crumb of the bread of life and I had something to say. To my unutterable surprise a young woman was gloriously saved while I was talking, a fact which she indicated only by the radiance of her face and the flow of her joyful tears. It broke up all hearts. It was a time of God's right hand, and instead of waiting one year for a convert here was one within two days.

Sunday morning the congregation thickened up and we saw the wonders of God's salvation. In a few weeks our membership went from thirty-five beyond a hundred. The news flew across the river and multitudes came over to see what was going on.

One morning a Richmond merchant, George J. Sumner, who walked every Sunday morning three miles to superintend our Sunday-school, and myself took a little book and trudged around Richmond for a couple of days and then sat down and counted results, and we had two thou-

sand dollars towards lifting the church debt. The good women of the several churches in Richmond agreed that they would give an entertainment to help us out, and they nearly knocked my breath out by enclosing me a check for \$1,500. I had never seen so much money in my life, and my own people took fire and gave me nearly a thousand dollars. I took the road, went into the newspapers, beat the brush far and wide, and the first thing I knew the church did not owe one dollar.

But then the house was not finished, and it required \$3,000 to do it. The faithful Sumner ordered me out again. We tramped Richmond once more and finished the house and paid the debt,—though not all before the dedication.

But there was another vexatious and frightful situation. I found thirty-five members of the church when I got there, but candor compels me to say that we had to turn out a large number of them, and would have turned others out, as they deserved, but for the fact that we had nobody to do the voting. It has always been a mystery to me how so much heterogeneous and unregenerate material could have gotten into a church with only thirty-five members all told. Our treasurer never could make a satisfactory report. Our choir leader was turned out for habitual cruelty to his wife. Our clerk was found to be spending many of his nights at the card-table. Our senior deacon, who collected the money for my salary, had his drunken sprees much more regularly than he paid me my salary, and the most prominent woman of the church had almost infinite genius for breeding disorders, enmities and heart burnings among the sisters. Nor was the case much better in the Sunday-school. One class of girls was taught by a Universalist, and she allowed the worst disorders and the most irreverent manners in her class; another woman teacher, blatant and insuffer-

able, had to be peremptorily ejected, and so grievous were the disorders that my ever faithful Brother Sumner and myself determined to reorganize the school, and it cost us over one-third of its constituency ;—truly unsavory things that ought not to be remembered and surely can hardly be attractive features in a book of reminiscences.

But I tell these things to show that we need not despair because things are crosswise and out of sorts. It is a good thing to do right ; it makes a lot of trouble while you are at it, but there is something constructive, vitalizing in cleaning up things for the Lord. Our Master had stirring times indeed, with the birds and the beasts and the desecrators in the temple. But He purified it, though under the crack of a whip. The Lord looked as if He could not do enough for us after this process of purification, and many of those that we sent away because of their offensiveness repented, came back and did noble service in the restoration which followed. Peace to the tomb of George J. Sumner—frail of health, sore of foot, sometimes the victim of depression and yet he wielded the battle-axe of truth and always struck on the Master's side.

No, times did not go easily with me. I made enough mistakes of my own to make life well-nigh intolerable at times. As for enemies, they were ever with me. The first interesting lie that was ever told on me that I heard, absolutely brought me to the dust. For a time I never dreamed that I could outlive it. A big and rugged fellow turned the rumor into the street that he had seen me in one of the most disorderly barrooms in Richmond, and in my simplicity I thought everybody would believe it, and I had hours of entirely unnecessary anguish about it, although I knew that never in my little life had I ever crossed the threshold of a barroom. The rumor dis-

solved and I survived and I began to learn that, as a rule, slander will cure itself if you will only give it time.

There was an old Baptist preacher and his wife, members of my church. He was a missionary out in the country. His son was a ministerial student at Richmond College and his conduct got him into such serious trouble that he was sent away and the other ministerial students, with an empty sort of heroism, pledged themselves never to recognize him as a minister unless they had satisfactory proof of his repentance. His bad habits continued after he left college, as I was made to know against my wishes, and about that time he came to Manchester to visit his parents. His presence was very embarrassing to me, but I went my quiet way until I learned that he was about to be made pastor of several rural churches not far from Manchester. I wrote a note to a prominent gentleman suggesting that they look into the facts of the case, telling where the proofs could be found. Then the trouble came. I was boarding in the hotel and the old master of the hostelry was a most kind-hearted friend of mine. I found that he was in great mental distress about something, little dreaming what it was until at last his anxiety took tongue and told me that the father of the young minister had called to say that I had committed a mortal offense and would be forced out of the town. I was touched by the gloomy sympathy which the old gentleman evinced, but not driven to despair by the revelation as to my projected downfall. In a few days the offended father called at the hotel and sent a message to my room that he must see me in the parlor. He was a man of almost colossal frame, with a voice correspondingly big, but withal self-indulgent, fearfully epicurean in his habits, fitful in his temper, incompetent in business affairs, and not capable of a long-sustained contest. I was young, feeble in health, unused to conflict and I

met him with some misgivings. I allowed him to state his case without interruption and he sought to manage it with the adroitness of an expert. He told me that he had just come from the country where he left the people mad with excitement and set on vengeance, and that it was all about his son. A letter had been written which reflected upon his son and that a man in the city of Richmond was suspected of writing the letter, and the feeling against him was such as would make it dangerous for him ever to go into that section, now so wrought up with animosity. Evidently his idea was to afford me an easy way of escape by laying the matter on the shoulders of my absent friend in Richmond. I gave him ample time and put ample space between the brief things I dropped in reply. I told him that the gentleman under suspicion was a great letter writer and that I could not assert absolutely that he did not write the letter in question, but that I must be frank enough to say that it was far more probable that I was the author of the document which had kindled the wrathful flame of which he spoke. I told him that I had written a letter about his son, but did not tell him that I had written it at the suggestion of the Richmond gentleman whom he had brought into the case. I told him I knew his son at college and had seen the certificates as to his recent drunkenness and misdemeanors and that my letter simply called attention to these documents, and that all that he had to do was to take up the case and disprove the charges in the case. I expressed regret that my action had caused such unfriendliness against me, but I told him that I was quite young, belonged to a family noted for its longevity and felt hopeful of living long enough for the little tempest of which he spoke to blow itself out. He told me that I was hopelessly ruined, that I could neither get bed nor bread in that storm-riven community, and in reply I told

him that under such perilous conditions I would avail myself of his warning and stay out until calmer times should come. He became taciturn and I saw that his purpose, so wrathful at first, was beginning to shake, and after a while he pulled out a very formidable paper, opened it carefully and informed me that some time before that he had become involved in financial embarrassments which were annoying him seriously and crippling his usefulness, and that these friends out in the country had organized a movement to pay him out. He passed the paper over to me and asked if I could put a word in favor of the movement on the paper. He supposed that the perils of the situation would scourge me into compliance. I paused not to consider, but I took the formidable paper and wrote in big conspicuous letters my approval, and closed it with, for me, quite a respectable gift in cash and passed it back. I knew the people out in that neighborhood would have ample opportunity to study that paper, and I took pains to date my note of commendation and felt that the old gentleman would unconsciously do vigorous missionary work in allaying the belligerent outbreak against my young and delicate reputation.

But that was not the end of it. The mother in the case, the wife of this old gentleman, was built on a different pattern. She had a memory that could not forget, an imagination which could give color of evil to simplest things, an energy that could work night and day and a tongue that could slash and cut the name of an adversary about as ruthlessly as it could be done. She did me up in all ways. She was a member of my church and the way she would scurry up and down the streets, tackling a man here, running in to see a woman there, firing into me in the market, writing notes and sowing insinuations beside all waters, was something that had not before

dawned upon me. I had been on the field only four or five months; things were new to me and I was verdant and rustic and so it did look as if my little bark had encountered storms too wild and strong to be outridden. If new families moved in she beat me out of my boots in getting there and helped them set up the furniture and also set them against me. If I received new people into the church on Sunday she was likely to call on them on Monday. Inasmuch, however, as this was all the church work that she was doing, things did not crumble under her ministry as my untutored fears led me to apprehend. She had three or four burly, rather boisterous boys, and there were many rumors that they had vengeance bottled up and only waited the fitting moment for breaking them on my head. Of course the matter had its worries. It caused some temporary alienations. One of the boys did actually come to my house on an exceedingly rainy night. I pulled him in, out of the storm, chatted freely with him about matters and things, told him that he was looking uncommonly well, that his face was ruddy to redness and that I hoped that he would have a career large and fine. I was skeptical as to whether he enjoyed the visit and bore his departure without breaking my heart. Events and incidents of this lamentable affair multiplied and kept up for two or three years and some friends with unthinking kindness furnished me ample advice, and that without any expense, that it would be best for me to bale up my goods, take a hint from adverse fortune and move out and away.

At some critical moments I would have found some relief in following this counsel, but in spite of all, Manchester struck me as a good place for me to be. I found my people all around me embarrassingly ready to fight for me and heartily united in the work of the church. Almost any storm will wear itself out, and that

tempest that seemed so threatening used up its violent breath, and fretted itself into quiet.

The young man did not get the churches and the old man fell into disfavor, and in a year or two the big furniture wagons stopped at his gate, crashed and packed his goods together and moved him away. I do hope that I will not be misunderstood in giving this reminiscence of an early trial which met me at the gate of my public career. It has in it, I am sure, no note of resentment, and while it is a clouded and unwinsome episode, it may strengthen the purpose of some young man to breast adverse fortune in the discharge of his Christian duties. It gives me a modest joy to know that in after years when age and sorrow grew heavy upon the shoulders of that old couple I had an opportunity, far more limited than I would have had it be, to do them service which I had reason to believe smoothed their path on the down-hill of their life. It looked as if grace from the invisible throne grew richer and wrought more mightily in them in their last days and that when their end came it was peace on earth, good will towards men and light ineffable on the hills beyond.

My Manchester pastorate covered the period of the war. I was there when it was packed with refugees, government operatives, soldiers and exiles. Its great buildings were hospitals except one, and that the greatest, which was a prison in which was confined almost an army of Federal prisoners. It would be easy to write a book of that period, full of victory, of tragedy and of wreck, but that is outside of my purpose.

For some time after the fall of Richmond Manchester was in charge of a brigade of negro troops. It brought a lamentable situation. Riot, robbery and bloodshed were rampant, and the suddenly emancipated negroes went mad with excess and brought the town to the verge of ex-

termination. Business was dead, private homes had their windows nailed up, their doors barred. Counted by heart-beats we lived fast in those dreadful days and the wonder was that we lived at all. In good time peace set her banners fluttering in the air, business tremulously opened its doors, the church bells rang and we lived again. I wonder now in looking back that disorder brought so little bloodshed and that law so soon uttered its voice and silenced the tumult.

When the war ended I had over five hundred members in my church, gatherings of the war times, and when the end came my flock went away by the hundreds,—some back to their old homes, and many went afar to seek their fortunes in unknown fields.

In a little while, however, the life of the town began to quicken. Many branches of business sprang up. The tobacco and cotton factories, the foundries and building operations started up with amazing briskness and the town filled rapidly with new people. I remained just two years in my Manchester pastorate and during that time there were several hundred additions to the church. They said always, and all seemed to say it, that Manchester was an ill-conditioned and spiritless town, but it was the scene of nine years of happy toil, loyal hearts, friendships dearer than life and tokens of heavenly favor, which made it lovely and unspeakably dear to my heart.

Those years in the grim old town across the bridge were enriched with countless incidents such as hold my heart to this moment, but I can only venture, in shutting the leaves of this chapter, to add two incidents whose pathos and beauty tell of the light which shone in the darkness.

It was in August, 1866, while pastor in Manchester, that I went to Hopeful Church on the border line of Louisa County to help in a revival meeting. I was greeted in

the churchyard by a college mate who said to me with decided feeling that he hoped that my coming might result in the conversion of his brother. I felt the force of his request, and said that I wished that I might be honored in helping him to bring his brother into the service of the Lord.

A day or two after the meeting commenced I walked quietly down the aisle on the men's side during the singing at the close of the sermon. My eye chanced to fasten on an exceedingly strong face, and one which reminded me in some way of my old college friend. I reached over and asked him if he was not the brother of my former chum at Richmond College. He replied that he was and appeared so serious that I ventured to say to him that I had heard of him, and that I was already hoping to see him take a stand in honor of the Gospel. "That is what I well know I ought to do," he said very seriously. "I infer from your thoughtful manner," I said, "that you recognize it as one of the most solemn duties of your life that you should confess and follow the Son of God and I ask you squarely, Are you not willing to do your duty?" A frown vexed his brow, and in a tone almost resentful he said, "No, I am not willing to become a Christian." I drew myself away with an air of finality as if I was giving the matter up. He laid his hand upon my arm and drew me back, and said in a whisper, "Do not misunderstand me, I beg; I mean no disrespect to you or to religion, but I cannot think of becoming a Christian at this time. I have a reason, but it must not be told."

From something that had been said to me, I was prompted to tell him that I thought I knew the cause of his refusal, but he replied with ill-suppressed excitement, "I hardly think so; if you do know, don't tell me you do."

"Excuse me, young man," I said, "I believe that you are afraid to become a Christian because your ambition is leading you very strongly in another direction, and you are afraid if you are converted you will have to preach the Gospel."

It was a centre shot, and it was impossible for him to stay the outburst of emotion. Then he told me that for years he had felt that he must preach the Gospel if he openly espoused the cause of Christ, and this he was not willing to do. His arrangements were already completed for entering the University of Virginia to prepare himself for the medical profession. I left him. After the services closed and as I was standing on the church steps I saw him riding slowly across the churchyard and I walked out, and intercepted his horse. "You are grappling a great problem," I said. "I would like to make one request of you: go home to-night, get your Bible, lock yourself up in your room, turn to the Fifty-first Psalm, get upon your knees and talk with God about your future and your duty. If, after you have done this, you find yourself decidedly unwilling to hear the call of God, take your Bible and write across its blank page, 'Resolved, that I will never, never be a Christian,' and then take your Bible and burn it. You will have no further use for it. If, however, you are willing to hear the voice of God and to follow Him, then write on the blank page, 'Resolved, that from this hour I give up everything in this world for Christ, and give myself to Christ.'" He touched his horse and without a word rode away. Through all that night this young man engaged my thought. I reached the church early the next morning and scanned the groups in the yard, but I could not find him. I watched the arrivals, hoping to find him. I watched in vain. I scanned the crowd in the house, but I saw no sign of him, and the conviction fastened

upon me that his worldly ambition had carried him off, and I should see him no more. My sermon was depressed in its spirit by the dread thought that I had lost a man, but when I finished preaching I stepped to the lower platform still imbued with a masterful anxiety about the young man, and said, "I wonder if there is a person in this house who would be willing to give up this world for Jesus Christ, and to give himself to Jesus Christ." I stopped short right there. The doors at the farther end of the house were double doors, and the leaf of the door on the men's side was open very wide. During the pause I noticed that leaf slowly shut and from behind it emerged a man—intending as I supposed to go out, but instead he headed towards the pulpit, and greatly to the thrilling of my soul, I saw that it was the young man that I had given up. It was with an alert and buoyant step that he approached me and, extending his hand, said, "The matter is settled with me. Here and now I give up this world for my Saviour and give myself to Him." Then turning and facing the audience he said, "My friends and neighbors, you have known me all my life, and you have marked me as a worldly and reckless young man. All that is gone and from this time I give up the world for Jesus Christ and give myself fully to Him." A new man was born into the kingdom of God that day. It was a conversion so clear, so free from unthinking emotion, and yet so genuine and convincing that it was more impressive than if an angel had appeared from heaven. It could truly be said it shook the entire neighborhood. A few days later he was baptized.

One morning in the early twilight I was aroused by an energetic ringing of my door-bell. There he was, the same young man. "What does this mean?" I asked.

"Just as you said," he answered, "and just as I foresaw, my call has come and I must go. I start this morn-

ing for the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Greenville, South Carolina, and I waked you up to tell you and bid you good-bye."

That was W. Carter Lindsay, now known all over the South as the Nestor of the Baptist ministry of South Carolina, for a third of a century the honored pastor of the First Baptist Church of Columbia in the Palmetto State.

Oh, for young men, thousands of the very pick and flower of our country, who would be willing to say, "I give up all for Christ and all I am I give to Him."

Another incident of my Manchester pastorate concerns a gentleman and his five sons, varying from fourteen to six years of age. It was a stalwart and striking group, handsomely dressed, bright-faced and with a look of good bearing. Naturally I thought what a hopeful addition that quintette of boys would be to my Sunday-school; but we passed each other without speech. Several times afterwards on Sunday afternoons I encountered this gentleman with the boys, always wondering who they were, and with a silent wish to know something about them. Finally while strolling along the street in company with one of my church-members I saw that same group of alert and attractive lads.

"Just look," I said, "can't we corral those boys for our Sunday-school?"

"What are you talking about?" asked my friend. "You will never get those boys. Their father is the most blatant and defiant infidel I ever saw in my life. He scorns the Bible, hates the church and would think it a disgrace for his boys to enter the Sunday-school."

This strong statement extinguished my hopes. I saw no way of bringing the boys under Christian influence and dismissed the case from my mind.

Quite a while after that I heard a violent ring at my door-bell very early in the morning. I answered in per-

son and was greatly surprised to find the infidel at the door. I invited him in, but in terms stern and scornful he refused to enter. I then asked him with mild courtesy if I could serve him in any way. He choked with excitement and whirling on his feet he walked hastily to the end of the veranda and stood there quite a while, evidently seeking to recover his self-control. Presently he came back much embarrassed and decidedly snappish and curt in his manner.

"I wish you would go around to my house," he said, in jerky and grudging words. "My boy Frank is sick and has been begging for two or three days that I would come around and get you to come to see him." I told him that I would come with pleasure and would be around in a little while.

Frank's mother met me in the parlor and took me up to the boy's room. As I entered the little fellow struggled up on to his elbow and gave me a most pathetic welcome. In his sunken, burning cheek, his large, wearied eyes and his wasted form I saw that he was not far from the gate of death. I greeted him cheerfully, telling him how pleased I was that he wanted to see me and assured him that I would be glad for him to talk to me just as much as he desired.

"They tell me," he said, "that I am getting better, but I know I am not. I think I get weaker every day and I am very sure that I cannot live." As he said this his lip quivered and his look of helplessness and distress almost broke my heart. When he recovered speech, he said, "I know I will not get well and I am afraid to die." This he said in a tone that I have never forgotten.

I told him that there was a way to get ready to die, and I told him in simple phrase the story of God's mercy as brought to us by Jesus the Son. If ever one time in my life I sought to tell it well, that was the time.

His listening was oppressive, but when I finished he told me that he could not understand what I had said.

I went over it again slowly and putting in little illustrations. Almost every beat of my heart was a prayer as I rehearsed the story. He lay still a little while after I finished, and then looking up told me again that he could not understand it. I said something to him about prayer, and laying my arm gently over his emaciated body I knelt by the bed and pled that God would bring light and peace to the troubled heart of the boy. When I arose from my knees he seemed almost ashamed as he told me that I must excuse him. He said that they did not talk about those things at home,—his father wouldn't allow it, and that I must not think hard because he could not understand. I prayed briefly again, and he said that he hoped I would come back again after a while and that he would think it over while I was gone.

I called again in the early afternoon of that day. As I entered his room he sprang up in bed, resting himself on his elbow, and welcomed me with a smile that seemed to have in it the peace and joy of heaven. He took my hand and looked at me with triumphant light on his face and said, "I understand, I understand!"

I drew him into speech, and my wonder was boundless as he revealed to me his surprising apprehension of the truth. His spiritual perception was incredible. Surely he had seen the face of God and was walking in the path of life with joyous step. It was all new to him and clear, and he told out his experiences in a manner so simple and so full that it was impossible for me to doubt.

When I was leaving he drew me down and in a sort of exultant whisper he said, "Now that I understand I want to tell you that I am not afraid."

After breakfast the next morning I called around to look after my little convert. It hurt me to the centre of

my heart to find the crape on the door. I knew at once what it meant. The mother, herself utterly destitute of Christian hope, met me in the parlor and could only sob out the anguish of her bereavement. I knew no word to comfort her with, and I did not attempt it. I thought possibly it might ease the burden of her soul if I could put her to talking about Frank, and besides I was anxious to hear. So I asked her to tell me the particulars of his death.

"Oh, I cannot do it," she said with an almost defiant emphasis. It puzzled me lest I had ventured too near to the seat of her sorrow. I spoke in terms apologetic, assuming that I had infringed upon the secrets of her sorrow.

"Not that. It does not embarrass me to talk about it, but I thought I would never say anything about it, because I thought people would never believe it. But I suppose I ought to tell you."

"After my talk with Frank yesterday afternoon," I said softly, "I could believe anything wonderful that you might tell me about Frank's last hours."

Thus encouraged she told the story, with hesitation at first, but rose with the telling until she was evidently inspired and gladdened by it.

"I was sitting with Frank last night," she commenced, "about ten o'clock, when he said, 'Mother, God would not allow me to die until I had a chance. I think I would have died before if God hadn't pitied me, but He has heard my cry and saved me, and I expect to die to-night.' I spoke lightly to him and said that I thought he would soon be walking about with his brothers as before. 'No, mother,' he said with decision, 'don't say it. I want you to wake me up to-night about one o'clock. When two o'clock comes to-night I expect to go.' I had no intention to wake him up, but a little after one he

roused up and inquired the time. When I reluctantly told him the time he begged hard that I would wake his father and brothers. I sought vainly to put him off, but I was forced to yield. When they came he spoke to his brothers one by one, simply bidding them good-bye, but when he came to his father he said things that I could never have supposed he would have thought of, for they had never been talked about in this house. 'Father,' he said, 'I found that I could not die your way. The thought of death made me awfully afraid. It seemed to me that I was going to another country and that they would not treat me right when I got there. I was afraid to go. That was the reason that I begged you to get the minister to come to see me. I thought there must be a God and I was afraid to meet Him, and I wanted to know about it. It was hard for me to take it in. He had to tell it to me over and over again. But when I saw that there was a Saviour and put myself in His keeping, I stopped being afraid.' It was strange to see him so calm and so well satisfied. He bade his father good-bye and kissed him as if parting for the night. We did not take it so seriously, for we did not think that he was really near to death. My husband and the boys went back up-stairs, and he told me to kiss him good-night and I began to read and continued until the clock struck two. I looked up and saw his hands clasped on his breast; I went to his side, touched him, but he moved not, called him, but he made no reply. He went at two, as he said he would."

He had a Christian funeral and the savor of his faith was left in the home. Salvation came to some members of the family, but not to the father.

One of the distinct and bitter impoverishments of the Civil War was the lack of literature. Few newspapers

and no magazines were published in the South. Sunday-school books, hymn-books, Bibles, tracts could be had neither for love nor money, and all the reading matter of a literary sort for the armies consisted in books given out of private families or private libraries. The Bible was highly prized in camp, but in the later part of the war there were the scantiest supplies. Indeed it was attempted, successfully I believe, to bring through the blockade Bibles and Testaments, and the demand for them was extremely pathetic. I recall that on a Sunday night all the Baptist congregations in and around Richmond united in a mass meeting with the view of raising money to purchase reading matter for our soldiers in the camp. It was a memorably impressive meeting. It was the first time that I ever saw Dr. J. L. M. Curry, and he made the long address of the evening. He was then in his prime, not a gray hair in his head,—compact, alert and imperial in form and face. His address was a masterpiece of fervent and thrilling eloquence. The money of the time was of bountiful bulk but of scant worth, but it was all that the people had and it stood even with the better-to-do as the price for the stern necessities of life.

Under the appeal of the hour the money poured in to the surprise of everybody. Almost every giver made an offering with the moving thought of some one in the army dear to his heart.

A number made thank-offerings,—something pleasing indeed in those days of bloody battles, lost fortunes and broken hearts. One man made a thank-offering because his son had passed unscathed through many battles, and a woman made an offering as a token of her gratitude that her son had been converted in the army. The tide of feeling was high and the souls of men enlarged. A young chaplain from one of the hospitals in Manchester arose and asked the privilege of making a thank-offering.

I knew him well. He was a South Carolinian, a warm-hearted, scholarly young man and animated by the loftiest Christian spirit. He said, "Mr. Chairman (he was quite far back in the house), I desire to make a thank-offering to God in view of the conversion of my two soldier brothers."

Some one,—I think it was Dr. Curry,—said to him publicly, "Tell us about it," but he seemed reluctant to respond. But finally he arose with a sort of embarrassed smile on his face and said :

"My brothers are not converted, but I have prayed for them and believe they will be and I thought I would make my thank-offering in advance." It was finely said and the incident closed.

Time sped away, but the memory of the young chaplain's significant utterance kept warm in my heart.

One morning I was in my study at the church when I heard a quick step of some one coming around to my door. There was a knock and then the door flew open. In sprang the young South Carolinian joyously waving a letter. "Here it is," he said ; "I have gotten my first installment. Here is a letter telling me of the conversion of my younger brother. Truly it is good to trust in God."

We had quite a time of rejoicing together and the young man went away. Not long after that came the battle of Gettysburg. Ah, that terrific, destructive slaughter ! It hung crape upon thousands of Southern doors. It put many a mother in an untimely grave and whitened the hair of middle-aged fathers who mourned the death of their first-born. It sounded the death knell of the Southern cause and bent the spirit of the incomparable Lee under the weight of its disaster.

Another morning found me in my study and I heard the step as of an old man moving slowly around to my

door. There was a dull knock and opening the door I found the young chaplain. He looked like another man,—pinched, old, and aimless—his eyes were glass; his face ashes and dumbness held his lips. “Oh,” he said as I drew him in the room, “the waves are over me and the light is refused to me. It looks as if I have trusted in God in vain.” Slowly and silently he handed me a letter. It was from a young man whom he knew telling how that he and the chaplain’s brother were in the charge on Cemetery Hill; how the brother was stricken down by the fragment of a shell, mortally wounded, as the young friend thought, how the kind fellow told of giving his canteen filled with water to the wounded one, and sought to place him in a resting way and hastened on in the deadly charge.

The letter did not say but it seemed to imply that the case of the wounded brother was hopeless, and I found myself stricken, confounded and worthless as a comforter. He lingered quite a while and when he left it was a relief to me. For days I think the mournful spell of that interview was upon me. I dared not call on the chaplain, for I had no message of consolation. One morning some time after I heard what I supposed to be a boy dash up to the door and without a signal he sprang through the opening doorway. It was the chaplain. Rapture lit his face and broke in exultant strains from his lips.

“The second installment,” he cried. “Read it, read it.” He handed me a letter, but before I could open it he said: “My older brother is alive. He is in a Philadelphia hospital, and they write that he will get well and, what is still better, he is converted. I did not trust in vain. ‘He that believeth shall not be confounded.’”

In some way I got an idea from this incident that gratitude and trust are apt to get from the Lord all that is wanted and almost without asking for it.

VI

SITTING IN THE ASHES

DURING all of the four years of the Confederate war my lot was cast in the town of Manchester, just across James River, from the city of Richmond, the capital of the Confederate government. Indeed I was there during the ominous brooding of the strife. I saw that memorable Convention—to be known forever as the Secession Convention—in all of its period of tumultuous uproar. I sat in the gallery and marked its hesitation, its divisions, the clash and wrangle of the mighty men, the sublime effort of Union sentiment to avert the fatal split, the passion and fury of the seceders, and then, after the decisive shot at Fort Sumter, I saw the dread and desperation with which the final act of separation was passed.

I saw the inpouring of Southern troops, regiment after regiment, battalion after battalion, company after company, as they gathered from every portion of the South to make up that imperishable army already gone into history as the Army of Northern Virginia.

I saw Beauregard, the hero of Charleston, and the first leader of the Southern troops as he entered the Southern capital. I witnessed the coming of the Confederate government from Montgomery to Richmond—saw Jefferson Davis, whose classic face flamed with patriotic fire as he received the greeting and heard the shoutings of the Richmond people.

Ah, what was it, of battle, or tragedy, or victory, or suffering, or destitution, or wreck, that I did not see dur-

ing those pregnant and historic years ! Thrice I sat on my porch in Manchester and heard the roar of artillery and the rattle of musketry as battles raged along the Chickahominy or boomed around the heights of Drewry's Bluff. Ofttimes victory spread her banners over Richmond and there were many days when cheeriness and triumph gladdened the city. Indeed we were fed on victories until we thought that Lee and his legions were invincible. Hope sprang ever-blooming in our breasts, and to the last we felt that in some way the Southern standard was yet to wave in victory over us. It looks strange indeed now that we could have felt so, and yet so we felt, and were trustful and serene.

A fairer day never blessed the earth than was the second day of April, 1865. It was the Sabbath day, and its reverential hush, and its soft spring light seemed close akin to worship. What added a delicious charm was the fact that the spring was exceptionally forward and the signs of green, white and blue were visible in garden and in field. That afternoon I went up to the church to some sort of religious service. After it was over, several of us lingered on the green grass of the churchyard, and chatted and laughed as was our happy wont. True enough our situation was pitiable even to tragedy. Our clothing was worn and darned, our food was mean and scant, our schools were shut up, our children could hardly find covering for their nakedness, nor bread to meet the cry of hunger, but in spite of it all we were expecting the war to end entirely our way, and dreamed of regal glory for the South. At about that time a man, moving at rapid pace, passed along the street, and when quite near to us said without slackening his gait : " Bad news from Petersburg ! Lee's lines were broken to-day and his army is reported in full retreat ! Richmond to be evacuated to-night."

Our informant sped away as if appalled by the story which his lips had told.

Instant blackness covered the earth. A pain as of death shot through my heart, and in that dread moment I knew that our cause was lost. The little group on the grass sprang to their feet and scattered without a word. Instantly, and with no distinct purpose, I struck out on foot for Richmond. Black and repellent as the situation seemed to be, I felt forced at once to meet it. As I was nearing the toll-house on Mayo's Bridge, I met my friend, Major Benjamin Nash, himself a great-hearted lover of the South, who with bitterness of face, and the look of one suddenly grown old, confirmed my worst fear, but seemed to have no heart to talk. In sheer desperation I pushed on, until I was in the city. The Sabbath, shocked by the confusion, had taken wing and only fright and wreck ruled the hour. Stores were wide open, and men were loading wagons and carts, and whipping rapidly away. Already loafers were in sight, eyeing eagerly the general collapse and wild to begin their pilfering. Spectators looked on and in mute anguish read in the haste and waste of the hour the signs of the supreme catastrophe. I pulled myself as far up as the iron fence around the Capitol Park. Wagons rattled around the Capitol and were fast filled with boxes, furniture and odds and ends, and went hurrying away, while vast loads of débris were dumped upon the ground. Truly it was a sickening sight. All the sacred things, which Virginia had hidden in her very bosom, were being ripped out, and hawked or scattered wildly on the ground. The hour of the despoiler was at hand, and I began to realize that I was in a city without a ruler except the mob, and without a law, except the greed of the robber. Nothing hurt me worse than that spectacle. It melted my bones and ate up my strength. Could I have taken all that was

left at that moment I should still have felt myself a pauper. If my country was dead, what could I want after that ?

My walk back to Manchester withered me into age. Not that I was bitter towards the conqueror ; my thoughts were not that way. It was simply one colossal collapse—the things which I lived for and counted immutably mine had sunken out of sight. I was a man without a country, without a hope and almost without God in the world. My leader was smitten ; my government in flight, my citizenship perished, and my life a thing for which no man cared. As for fear I knew it not, except that deadly harm might come to those who looked to me for protection, and I knew that I would not be a straw's worth between them and danger.

When I reëntered my town it was truly another place. The news had swept the streets. Startling sights broke upon me at every step. Men huddled in helpless groups and felt that not even the right of self-defense was left them ; women were weeping on the porches, or else could be heard shrieking behind their barred doors and windows ; children were clinging to their parents and begging to be taken away, and already unearthly figures, harbingers of an impending upheaval, were flitting through the streets.

As yet only a dim sense of freedom struggled in the breasts of the slaves, and a habit of submission to authority still held them, but with a relaxing grasp. But as twilight deepened into night a swell of lawlessness broke all restraints. The back and unlighted streets began to throb with dangerous excitements. Kitchens and shanties filled speedily with negroes ; and their hysterical screams, their ribald dances and their cry for vengeance gave hellish terrors to the night.

The story of that night can never be told. Possibly I

come nearest to a picture of it in declaring that it was a night in which there was absolutely no law. The old authority was gone and the new had not come. It was a time when only passion and fury uttered their voices, and when liberty meant riot and violence. The very streets roared with shriek and curse, with howl and menace, and with the insanity of countless crowds. Whispers of riotous gangs going forth for vengeance, or for plunder, filled the air, ran the streets, and bred terror in the hearts of women.

But heaven forgot not to be merciful, even that night. All through its hours the Southern army was retreating through our streets, but it was too orderly and quiet to be affected by the existing confusion. Even in the flight of that army the town found its safety. It was not long after dark before the head of this retreating column began its mournful march through the town, and it continued practically until the morning light. There was a chastened cheerfulness about these men. They gave no hint of fright and never a mutter of discontent. They knew they were abandoning the base of their supplies, the citadel of their strength, and were opening their rear to overwhelming forces, but through all that night I caught no note of panic nor disloyalty. Their passage through the town added unspeakably to our gloom, for we knew well enough that with them went out hope, and in their place would come the conqueror.

Among these retreating thousands I had a host of acquaintances. The line passed my gate and at that gate I stood and bade my farewells to scores upon scores. In this hurried story I can give but one example of those whose going out that night made my heart faint. That one was John R. Bagby, a captain of artillery, the most cherished of all my college friends, a ministerial student who quit the theological seminary to join the army and

served the full term of the war. It took only our silent tears and warm hand-grasp to tell the anguish of our parting. To both of us the outlook was blackness itself, and we parted as those who should hardly meet again.

But we did meet again and have met a thousand times since. He lives even to this day, and through all the years that are gone our souls have been knit together ; only death can part us and not even that can part us for long.

In passing through the streets of Richmond many of the soldiers found that the Confederate authorities had abandoned a large supply of food and clothing, and from these stores the boys helped themselves so far as they came in reach of them, and so far as they had the means of transporting them. On the bayonets of many guns hung hams or shoulders, which these needy heroes were lugging along, little knowing when Mars' Robert would ever issue another ration. Deep as my troubles were I was quite lumbered up with Confederate money. In quite a number of cases I found that by generous display of Confederate money, I could bring on a trade for some of this bacon, which same thing I actually did, although I have to confess that in some of those trades the transaction took place before midnight, and if the Sabbath day runs until midnight I have to confess that on that occasion at least I let my eagerness to get a little something to keep my soul and body from prematurely separating from each other to tempt me to infringe the Holy Day.

Perhaps, too, I might right here slip in another confession which may cast a shadow over my integrity. Not long before the fall of Richmond, General Robert E. Lee borrowed all the flour from one of the Richmond mills, promising that when his supplies came in he would return it. In that lot of flour I had a half interest in four bar-

rels, and with no desire to asperse the memory of General Lee, candor constrains me to say that he never returned my flour—obviously because the General's supply never came in. The result of it, however, was that the dust in my barrel was well-nigh non-apparent. I heard on Monday morning that several car-loads of corn-meal had been left in the hurry of the retreat, at a station in Manchester, just two squares from my house. Inasmuch as General Lee had failed me on the borrowed flour, and inasmuch as this corn-meal could never be of any service to the fleeing Confederacy, and inasmuch as I knew it did not belong to the Federal army, and inasmuch as one of my church-members agreed that he would bring me a bag or two of it to help me tide over the distress of the times, I did give place to a couple of bags of about as coarse a quality of meal as I ever undertook to use in my life. It was quite fortunate for the Federal army that I did confiscate the meal, for two of its commissioned officers came to my house to dinner one day, and the only thing in the world that I had to give them to eat was the bacon I bought on Sunday, and meal that I got possession of on Monday, not according to law, nor contrary to law, but because there was no law on duty at that time.

In the gray of Monday morning I was called to my gate where I found a Confederate major of cavalry. He turned out to be a schoolmate of my childhood in the mountains of old Bedford. He was accounted the poorest boy in all the school, though several of us were easy seconds, and he was also considered the most promising boy in the school, though in that case very few of us were ever mentioned for second place. He made a fine war record and my heart swelled with pride to see him again. Indeed I would have had another acute mixture of satisfaction and sorrow in seeing him but for one unfriendly fact. My old time chum had a roll of Confederate jeans

balanced on the neck of his horse, almost three feet in height and utterly concealing him from view except his rugged and war-worn face. I knew him at sight and gave him the glad hand. I did not doubt but that he and his tattered battalion needed better equipment, and I must not disparage his provident expedient for helping them out, but I must own that my sense of the heroic got a shock. It crossed my grain to see this friend of my boyhood at such a critical time loaded with a spoil so ponderous and unwieldy. Besides it was out of all harmony with the tragic glory of that night to see a Confederate officer with a trophy so ludicrous. The sight hit me in three or four different spots and made an impression so complex that I have not quite recovered from it yet.

During that fateful night troops of the townsmen flocked to my house—not members of my church only but many citizens. Some came to tell me of the terrors of their families; some to discuss the impending peril; some drawn by an inherent longing for sympathy; some to confer as to how we should bear ourselves when the conquering enemy came in. Not a few others from more exposed quarters of the town came to share the indirect guardianship of the passing soldiery. Taken altogether that was the most eventful night of my mortal life, at once the longest and the shortest, the night most crowded with fears, conflicts and strains, and one which seemed so loaded with omens of evil.

One odd and abhorrent incident of that night still clings tenaciously to my memory. It was out of tune with other horrors, and in some respects to me the worst horror of it all. There lived in the town a miser. It was what I saw in him that enabled me to understand what the Bible means when it says that covetousness is idolatry. He was a man who had rare chances for mak-

ing a worthy manhood ; he married a woman of the most refined and earnest nature, and his opportunities for usefulness were a great appeal to any good that might be in him, but his love of money was wild, ungovernable, insane. It overrode his conscience, his self-respect, his love of home and his beliefs in all things invisible. Once I went with him to bury his son and all the way to the cemetery he arrayed himself against God for the death of his boy, said it was unnecessary and that it would have been so much better if the boy could have stayed to go in business and to have shared in the boundless revenues of the future. During the war he had no patriotism, no pride for the Southern side, no concern as to the final issue of things, except so far as it would affect his own fortune. He seized the disorders of the times as his opportunity for oppressing the weak, cheating the unwary and fleecing all comers. In that dread, woeful night this cankered and repellent creature came into my house. A scourged spaniel could not have seemed more dejected, frightened or horrified than he. He was shrivelled almost out of human shape, his eyes were wild with despair, he shrank down or collapsed in a shapeless pile at my feet, and my pity fought with my contempt as he told his story. During the war, as he told me in mortal fright, lest some one might overhear the story, he had turned everything that his hand could touch into gold, and had quite an accumulation of it hidden in his house. In the dread that the inflamed soldiery would invade his house and carry off his treasures, he came to ask me what he must do with his money. I felt pity enough for him to hear his story and advised him to take it out of town into the depths of a neighboring forest and bury it. I told him that he did not need to be afraid, for his safety would be in the prevailing terror and disorganization of the night. He told me afterwards that he acted on my

suggestion and almost grew interesting as he gave the account of his trip, his entering the desolate forest, his opening of the earth and his burial of the heavy jar of gold. What hurt me most in dealing with this case was that I saw in the form of a man nothing of the man left except a victory of Mammon. He cared not for the fall of a friend nor the coming of a foe, nor for the safety of his children, nor for the lives of his neighbors. There was nothing in all the universe of God for him to love or cherish except his gold. And yet after all I must do him justice, and I may be able yet to speak a word that may soften the bitterness of his case. In a few days things settled down; he found his home was not to be troubled, and in his own crafty way he brought his money back to his house, and one day to my unspeakable surprise he walked into my house looking almost human, with the ghost of a long departed smile on his face, and a semblance of gratitude on his lips, and handed me a ten dollar gold piece. I had an impulse to throw it back at him, but the several ladies of my household chanced to be on hand, and it had been long indeed since they had seen the shine of gold, and, moreover, there were many pretty things flaming in the store-windows, which only gold could buy, and after all the miser's gold was hospitably welcomed in the minister's house.

That spasm of appreciation I grieve to say was not prophetic of any reformation on his part. In after days I used to meet him often wrapped in a heavy cloak, bent of back, scared of eye, loathsome, crafty and cowering beneath a nameless dread.

The dawn of Monday was rich in the splendors of spring. It looked as if night had thrown its friendly mantle over my heroic brothers as they hastened out of the city to rally again beneath the standard of Lee. The day was cloudless and the air was soft and genial, and yet the

light only increased our apprehensions. Our friends were gone and now we knew that the conqueror was at the gate.

About nine in the morning I was down at the Manchester end of the bridge and saw the rear-guard of the Southern troops as they crossed over. As soon as the tramp of their heavy feet quit the swaying structure I heard a man give the order for setting fire to the bridge. I quickly glanced towards the man who spoke the word and it was General Ewell, one of the famous Southern commanders. He had already lost a leg in the service, and he had the stern, hard look of the man who had made great adventures and had lost all. I honored him because he looked so honestly wretched, for I thought that woe was eminently becoming every Southern man on that bitter day. I made a revel of my misery that morning and it was indeed a feast of bitter herbs.

If my memory does not go awry the last man to cross James River on that bridge was John C. Breckenridge, one of Kentucky's imperial sons. He sat his horse in gloomy dignity, and a finer specimen of knightly beauty rarely ever graced the earth. It was no time for admiration, and it bent me to the dust to see such a king among men so shattered with adversity, so stripped of place and power, and yet my heart paid court to him as one who had given all to the cause he loved.

Simultaneously with the firing of Mayo's Bridge the torch was applied also to the bridges of the Richmond and Danville, and the Richmond and Petersburg railroads. This clipped all connection between the two cities, and seriously delayed the Federal troops in their pursuit of the flying squadrons of the South. It also seriously enhanced the concern and the apprehension of the Manchester people.

From these bridges the fires quickly spread to the

warehouses and other buildings along the river, and indeed some of the warehouses were needlessly fired by our men. These fires were the lurid forerunners of that fearful conflagration, which lasted for twenty-four hours, and laid in ashes the great bulk of the business portions of the city. For the time the fire department of Richmond was non-existent, the water-works were grievously out of order, and the Federal forces were put at a great disadvantage in seeking to arrest the flames. It was one of the mercies of heaven that there was no wind, and the flames were not able in many places even to cross the streets, and it was a matter of grateful wonder that the entire city was not laid in ashes.

From the Manchester side the fire was in full view and our hearts sank very low as we saw block after block go down. Already our higher hopes, our hallowed treasures, our army, our leaders and our cause were gone ; and it was the very anguish of despair to feel that the city itself, the pride of Virginia and of the South, was about to be blotted from the face of the earth. It was one glimmer of relief which came later on that the city, in a large measure, was left standing, but standing in the midst of vast ruins, standing desolate without the song of the toiler or the laughter of children. Be it said that for days and weeks, women rarely appeared on the streets, and the bustle and stimulating noise of business was gone. At the foundry, at which the munitions, and especially the ammunitions of war were manufactured, there were, according to common report, seven hundred thousand shells piled in great masses. The heat of the flames during the later morning of Monday ignited the fuses of these monster balls and such an explosion followed as possibly never shook the earth before. The power of it crashed the windows in hundreds of Richmond houses, and the fragments of the broken shells went far and wide,

damaging roofs, filling many homes with consternation, and in a number of cases wounding and killing persons on the streets. The bridges in full flame and long ranges of houses wrapped in fire, and the volcanic smoke boiling up and spreading over the city and that too amid the explosion of shells, made a scene so varied, so direful, and so destructive that men and women turned away in terror.

In 1862 when Lee and McClellan were fighting on the Chickahominy the roar of their guns sensibly shook the city. During one of those days I attended a public meeting in one of the churches of the city, and the thunder and rattle of the guns, though five miles off, made it impossible to conduct the service in a way to be heard. That was nothing compared with the racking storm of evacuation day.

One of the early shocks of evacuation morning was caused by the blowing up of the Confederate gunboats at the lower end of the city. As each huge monster was blown into fragments the effect was a distinct earthquake, and the fragments did vast damage by spreading fires and crippling the people.

The situation in our town was fearful enough on Monday morning. By this time the negroes had lost all sense of order and control and their acts of violence and vengeance had already begun. For my part I felt deeply the seriousness of the hour. Already mutinous and unrestrained by any law and joined by not a few desperate and rioting whites they seemed ready for murder. They were surging up and down the streets shouting, singing, flinging vulgar insults at the white people, and indulging in hideous and unseemly displays that filled the town with alarm and terror.

I took it on myself to confer with the members of the town council. They were with few exceptions old men

utterly unequal to the grave exigencies of the hour and apparently terror-stricken to the point of despair. I called their attention to the situation and suggested that they send a committee across the river and ask for a guard from the Federal army. They looked as if they dreamed; nerveless and vacant they sat, and in a way repelled the idea that anything could be done. But there was some spirit in the young member of the council, and he joined me in the appeal. Finally one of them reached the happy stage of suggesting that I should undertake the mission to Richmond, and as soon as they said it the young member of the body with modest courage proposed that he and I should go together. It was a heavenly relief to the bewildered council, but an awkward undertaking for us. I must say that I plucked a little consolation from the fact that those timid and limp old gentlemen looked a good deal worse than I knew that I felt, but there was scant time for comparing my anxieties with those of any one else. And so in company with the youngest member of that council, ever afterwards a gentleman and friend in my eyes, we set out on our hazardous journey. We took with us the good wishes and indeed the admiration of the councilmen. We went down to the river edge and luckily discovered a lazy little ferry-boat fastened to the bank close by one of the flour mills. It was not our boat, but we paused not to tamper with abstract ethical problems, but at once and unscrupulously confiscated the frail bark. It rocked and dipped as we headed across the stream, and there was a good probability that this brace of adventurers would find a watery grave and speedy oblivion.

Happily we reached the Richmond side, found a fastening and hiding-place for our boat, and climbed out on the bank to find ourselves in the wholesale business part of the city. Our eyes fell upon such a sight as perhaps

few have ever dreamed of. I hardly know what to call it. Not a mob. We think of a mob as a collection of men drawn together by some common object, molded into transient unity by a deadly purpose, and set on doing their minds, regardless of hazard or law. The crowd which we encountered, as it straggled, shrieked, danced, cursed and contended with each other, was thoroughly heterogeneous. Its only point in common was the unmitigated badness of all of its individual parts. The convulsion had emptied the underworld on top of the ground, and in that revolting mass were deserters, spies, thieves, men and women of the worst. Castle Thunder was a Confederate prison for traitors, military delinquents, blockade runners, government convicts. All the rubbish, filth and scum of such a time, had its doors torn open, and made its ghastly contributions to the disorder and wreck of the city. The state penitentiary located in the city was deserted of its guards, and its legion of criminals burst forth, maddened with liberty, famishing for food, and eager to join in the anarchy and riot of the day. This of course was before the Federal authorities had formally taken charge of the city. It was into a shifting, desperate scene like this that my manly young councilman and myself were cast. The howling crowd took scant note of us, though they flung us an occasional curse or an indecent threat and further enlivened the situation by the firing of pistols and other reckless indulgences. We pushed through the crowd, struck up Main Street and made for the military headquarters of the Federal forces which stood near where the city hall is now located. It was soldiers, soldiers, soldiers everywhere; it was bayonets, muskets, muskets, bayonets and lounging soldiers on every side. The Capitol Square was filled up and the headquarters by no means easy of access. We asked questions, saluted all blue coats which stood in our

path, accepted repulses as a part of our lot, advanced by degrees and finally got into the room of the man in whose hands the destinies of the day were placed.

The general was heated, overworked and showed the corrugated brow in its worst form. We practiced the utmost brevity in stating our case, which consisted in asking for a guard. Thereupon he delivered a brief lecture to us for having set fire to the city, and declared that he had not an adequate force for his own purposes. We told him that we did not live in Richmond and could hardly be held responsible for the fire, and that what we were looking for was to find somebody to aid us in preventing our own town from being burned. I did not blame the general for his excitability and had no intention of calling him to account for not treating his prodigal brothers with more gentleness upon their return. We did get some comfort out of the fact that we got in one on him in not being in the town which was in flames, and there was a faint suggestion of a smile which struggled vainly to light up the crags and corners of his face. In a tone manifestly softened, he told us to go back home (not even asking us to stay and take dinner with him), and that he would see what could be done. We congratulated each other that he didn't hang us, and that the sun was still shining, and we put back to Manchester as promptly as our facilities for travel would justify.

In about two hours after our return we heard distant strains of martial music, and in a little while a negro brigade, officered with white men and attended with the shrieks, shouts, laughter and threats of a savage crowd of negroes marched into town. Our petition had been answered in a startling and an embarrassing way. The white people, irrespective of rank or age, went into retirement; we retired also at our house, but that night our back yard and kitchen filled with negroes. They

were uninvited but evidently felt well at home, and while I have often heard of making night hideous, the hideousness of that night can never be told. I think they offered sacrifices to all the gods that night. Some sang religious songs and shouted themselves into speechlessness; the dance with all its wild orgies employed the energies of others, while Bacchus seemed to be the most popular god of the promiscuous revellers.

Unwarranted liberties were evidently given the negro soldiery. They raced the town in groups and kept everything at white heat, except themselves, though they were by no means wanting in the matter of heat. For a while we had pandemonium in full dress and yet wonderful to state there were no serious acts of violence, and no conflicts of the races. Tuesday morning I found it necessary to call on the brigadier-general in command of the post. The occasion of this visit did not chime exactly with the music of the hour, but it was none the less important that I should go. Just before Petersburg was evacuated on Sunday night a train of cars, with a number of wounded soldiers aboard, was started for Richmond. It was so long delayed on the way that when it got to Manchester the Petersburg bridge was in flames, and of course the trains had to stop. There these crippled Confederates were left without beds, without physicians, without shelter and without food. A number of Manchester people opened the first floor of my church building, got mattresses and other things, wherever they could beg them, and improvised a hospital, to which these wounded sons of the dying cause were brought in such conveyances, and by such other means as necessity and love could hit upon.

I felt it my duty to report this matter to the commanding general and hence my call. At first sight I did not like the man. I did not suppose that I would find an ideal soldier in command of a negro regiment, and prob-

ably took along several vigorous prejudices as a part of my stock in trade. I had in my hand a few religious tracts which I intended to take up to the soldiers. These the general neatly lifted out of my hand without asking consent, and found that one of them was in the shape of a letter from a mother to her son in the army, in which she told him that she hoped he would be a good soldier, but above all things she desired him to be a good Christian. In that phrase about being a good soldier the general discovered a magazine of rebellion and disloyalty, and tore up the pious little tract. I bore the thing because I had nothing else to do, and because I did have one or two other things I wanted to do. After my statement about the soldiers up at the church he seemed to relent and told me we would not be interrupted in our attempt to promote the comfort and save the lives of these soldiers. I thanked him and arose to leave, but he stopped me.

"Why don't you take the oath of allegiance and help me restore order to this town?" he asked in a decidedly brusque voice.

He then said that I could be of service to him if I would do this. He called my attention to the fact that my government was in flight, my armies in full retreat, deserters and prisoners were coming back constantly, and that there was no hope of my cause. He spoke roughly, and yet I could not be sure as to whether there was any note of menace in what he said. I found myself under a novel pressure, and probably on the verge of a crisis.

"I will have to admit, general," I said respectfully, "that the outlook for my cause is gloomy indeed, but it is my cause. I have been identified with the Confederacy from its beginning and while its situation is extremely distressing, its government still exists and its armies are still in the fields. I would find a blush crimsoning my

cheek if I forsook my colors in the presence of the enemy, and I confess that I would be utterly ashamed for it to go abroad to our army or to our people that I had made haste to take the oath. I would lose the good-will of those who are more than life to me. I must wait the final issue, and if that is the downfall of the Confederacy then I shall have no government, no country, no citizenship and no protection. That will be the time for me to decide what I ought to do about the oath of allegiance."

I must have made a right warm little speech ; at least my heart got loose and ran flaming into my words, and somehow I found myself gloriously indifferent to what he might think of my little oration. He looked at me with changing color and when I ended he still looked.

"I'll be dogged if I don't believe you are right," he said with great feeling. "And I believe it is best for you to wait."

It almost precipitated a scene. His cordial words kindled within me a sense of brotherhood.

"And now, general," I added, "I think I may take the liberty of saying to you that if I can be of any service to you, and you feel disposed to trust me, you will find me at your command. I desire good order and peace as truly as you do."

He said : "Well, sir, I can trust you, and we will work together."

I confess that the interview related above was something of an epoch in my life. In this man whom I did not trust at the first blush, I found something that was manly, trustful, and even brotherly. I had already seen the inevitable end, but the sight of no prison gate could have moved me to forsake my cause as long as it had a gun to fire or a battle to fight. I was rather ashamed of myself that I had not suffered more, and I shrank with a

passion stronger than life from any compulsory oath. The generous view of the case so pungently expressed by this military master was a gleam of light from the other side. It refreshed me exceedingly, and came as a sort of crown to my self-respect.

From that moment I suffered no disturbance on the part of the Federal troops. They treated me with the utmost courtesy and a number of the officers were guests in my house, though it was scant bounty that I could spread for their entertainment. Two of the commissioned officers, captivated probably in no degree by a winsome manner upon my part, but probably longing for taste of home society and fare, dropped in on me about dinner time, on one of those serious and quaking days. They brought a crisis for the female membership of my house, who had been suddenly transformed into cooks and housemaids. They received the new honor thus thrust upon them in a manner so ambiguous and confounding that I anticipated the dinner with wasting apprehension. Troubles throbbed and muttered in the air, and I conducted my guests to the table with trembling, and I knew not how to hold up my head as I looked at the scant and ill-cooked dinner. It consisted of fried bacon, corn bread, coffee and a vast amount of nothing besides. The officers were gentlemen for they forced down the coarse material spread before them and smiled their gratitude, but just the same I knew they had tales to tell when they went back to headquarters that would burn my ears to a crisp if they ever got back to me. I charged the women with being actuated with sectional hostility in spreading such a dinner, but they replied with spirit that they had served the best with which the master of the house had provided them. They admitted that we did have a little flour but that they turned it into dried apple turnovers and had turned a few honest pennies

by selling them to the Federal soldiers. To this day I believe that they might have raked up a few of those flap-jacks as a dessert, for those spangled and handsomely dressed representatives of a yet hostile government.

Within a day or two the Federal army had finished their pontoon bridges across the river, and they were opened for the accommodation of the most exasperated and unreconciled rebels, of which I, if not chief, was unmistakably one. I found it a battle with my sorrows to cross the bridge and behold fair old Richmond sitting in her ashes. I went, however, surveyed the dismal wreck, picked my way along streets, every foot of which I had known so well, and saw them now piled with the débris of the fire. I marked the sights of buildings where my friends had their stores, and in which I had had the happy liberty of going so often. Spoilsmen were climbing over the crushed walls, scrambling through the ruins, under their quenchless passion, for booty or for relics. Now and then I met an old acquaintance or two standing in the desert of the wreck viewing the places where their business and their fortunes had been. Some seemed held by a fascination which had in it dead hopes and shattered purposes. Not one did I find who was cleaning away the rubbish or preparing to rebuild. How could they? They had nothing left. I never saw a spectacle so grim and so disheartening, and yet there is a spring, a self-recovering power in many souls, and some of those men cracked their pathetic jokes, talked of better days and did not seem at all ready to give up. I climbed the hills towards Broad Street, which contained many of the retail stores of the city and which had escaped the fire. Most of these were shut up. Their owners had neither stock nor capital. Here and there a shrewd settler, more distinguished for enterprise than for a nice distinction between *meum* and *tuum*, had taken possession of some

buildings and was crying the virtues of his wares in the ears of the passers-by. Already shifty and adventurous Yankees, as if travelling in air-ships and bringing their freight with them, were driving a trade for storerooms and getting ready for business. As for markets there were none. The country people had little to sell and what they had they brought in carts and peddled from door to door. The bulk of the houses were shut up, locked and silent. As for the men they ambled aimlessly along the street or bunched in idle groups at the corners and looked seedy and suspicious. Parolled Confederates were in sight everywhere, but in almost every case idle, but after all they held up their heads the highest and were of all the most cheery and contented. They had done their best, and they who do that can never be miserable afterwards. Blue coats were predominant and, as for negroes, it looked as if Africa itself had been turned up on one side and had emptied her millions upon us. All that were in Richmond stayed, and all on the outside got there as soon as they could. They owned the sidewalks and filled them to overflowing.

The resident streets were bare and showed few walkers or riders. Blinds were shut and curtains drawn as if to hide the sorrow within or to shut off the sight of the invaders. Even in that extremity Sorrow demeaned herself with dignity, and sometimes with a composure which nothing could destroy. Ladies rarely appeared on the streets and children shrank in mortal dread from the first sights of the blue coats. How the people subsisted during those early days is a mystery which pride veiled and which no historian will ever tell. I knocked at the doors of old friends, but it was hard to get replies. They were not keeping an open house, and did not desire the company of their impoverished relative from the country. Their hopes had suffered an irretrievable collapse and they

needed time for thought, readjustment and a renewed love of life.

I am not sure that an outsider could hit off the exact mood of the Southern people at the fall of the Confederacy. Many of course think of it as a state of sullen and bitter despair, carrying in it revenge and hatred towards the conqueror. In the case of hard and unrelenting men this was probably true enough their state of mind. It was not the mood of the real soldiery nor of the unselfish and devoted Confederate citizens. They were not built for a thing so little and so despicable.

Of course the crash was grievous enough. It was a flat fall, and with nothing left. But earnest and honest men have a good bottom to rest upon. They have a consciousness of rectitude and fidelity which is a fountain that sometimes runs low but never runs dry. People of that type know how to accept the inevitable; indeed our people had gone their length and when the end came it was a distinct finality. What is after all more to the point, the Southern people have deep wrought in them a faith in a sovereign God, and the fall of the Southern cause came as a revelation to them. It showed them that their plans did not fit in with the divine purpose. The Richmond people naturally enough went into mourning; they were sore and broken, and their grief courted solitude. It was not sulking in the tents but simply taking a season for healing, submission to God and preparation for the new order. There was sadness enough but not the bitterness that many have thought.

Dr. Jeremiah B. Jeter was then one of the dominating social and religious forces in the city of Richmond. The strongest part of his life had been spent there, and his soul went all along with the Confederacy in its historic march to its fate. It was said of him that on a Sunday afternoon just after the declaration of war a report came that

a Yankee gunboat was steaming up the river with a view of shelling the city, and that the doctor when informed of the fact seized an old rifle and put out bodily and alone to confront the iron-clad foe. This impossible tradition lacks historical backing, but it cleverly illustrates that ardor and enthusiasm of this magnificent old Virginian.

In my memorable ramble through the desolate city I called on the good Dr. Jeter, and to my great edification I found him in a genial and happy mood. He had accepted the situation with equanimity and was about as cheerful as he usually was. He was about the only man who seemed to have a future and he had one with a grow on the end of it, and before I got through with him I had awakened to see that there were yet many good things to come. My walk extended out to Richmond College, my alma mater, within whose walls and on whose campus happy years had been spent. The distant sight of the college sent sickness to my soul, for it reminded me of the scores of my gallant brothers who had been among the foremost in the fray, some of them attaining noble distinctions and others of them dying chivalric and honorable deaths. As I came nearer I saw the campus, filled with Federal tents and the building looking like a garrison castle. It was left without enclosures, with its library gone, its furniture destroyed, and with a constituency stripped, scattered and impoverished. To me that was the most heartrending thing of all that reign of ruins. I piloted my way back to Manchester, torn by adverse passions, but with a new resoluteness as to the future. The end of the war opened the gates of the Federal prisons, and thousands of our Southern men came back through Richmond on their way home. Not a few of them were dumped out of ships or from the trains, covered with diseases, with scant clothing, in many cases with wounds and in all cases without rations

or transportation. Many of them were tied up for weeks in the city, and it was a pathetic struggle with them to find a bed to sleep in or bread to eat. In my home I had a cherished and a noble-hearted sister, already well advanced in life, and her soul cried out with pity for these remnants of the lost cause. She watched the railroad station and often brought in these prisoners to give them a bed or to divide with them our scanty bread. Her affinity for these unfortunate braves was enriched with religion and it did seem impossible that one with so little could help so many and help them so much.

One day this indefatigable woman walked in from the near-by station escorting a limping ex-Confederate and looking as proud as if she had captured the entire Federal army. It turned out that her new conquest was an old acquaintance from the fair hills of old Bedford, our own proud nativity. A fine old citizen was he, known well to us in brighter days, and much honored in his own community, a private in the ranks, ever at the point of danger when battles raged until fate sent him a prisoner to Point Lookout. Bent, soiled, thin of face, marked with diseases and ragged indeed. It made us proud to welcome him and treat him as our own. A bed was speedily prepared for him but he would none of it, saying he had too much mercy for the bed to touch it, and his refusal was flat and final. He was led to a lounge in the parlor but again he refused with a sombre glee, insisting that an inhabitant of Point Lookout had no right in any Virginia parlor. Modestly he besought the mean privilege of spreading his blankets into a pallet on the back porch where he might bask in the April sunshine. We quarrelled openly with him for trampling upon our right to make him comfortable but he met it with a playfulness that revealed too plainly his feebleness. We bantered him about his false pride, pictured to him the

welcome awaiting him in Bedford, and outlined the delicacies stored away for him by his wife, and what a spoiled fellow he would be when he got back home. In all the jollity and merrymaking he joined right heartily, but finally turning over on his side, he asked that he might refresh himself with a little nap. In the meanwhile the ladies were bestirring themselves to beat up something fit for the tired old Confederate to feast upon. Presently the dinner-bell rang—rang all for him, and things were made comfortable about his chair, but he did not answer the call. The good sister claimed that she alone should arouse him and bring him in. In a moment she returned speechless except as her tears told the story. The strained chord of life in the breast of the veteran had snapped while he slept, and all the joys of his Bedford home of which we had told him were denied him.

We had not a dollar in the house, but I went out, begged some plank, begged a few nails, begged the services of a carpenter and went to our little cemetery and took without begging space for a hero, and then begged a cart and we walked together, a loving little procession and put the body away. When winter came on loved friends from Bedford came down, took up the body, gave it a better coffin, carried it home to sleep in the graveyard of his fathers. It was just one of the ten thousand after-sorrows which came to Southern hearts when the strife had already ceased.

One of the deacons in my church before the war was a New Englander and he went home when the deadly noise began. On the Sunday after the fall of Richmond he reappeared at the church, and he got looked at from several different points of the compass. His presence was a test of heart feeling. Some shied off their own way and left him the rest of the earth. Some passed him a bow with pendant icicles, some shook his hand, and as

for myself I proudly shared in a small degree with all classes of them, but after we chatted a while, he looked just like he used to look, and troops of pleasurable feelings raced through me, and I invited him to dine with me, and he looked in six or seven different ways and finally said he would, and he did. We had a jolly time and talked about everything except a little difference of feeling which had existed between the two sections for the preceding four years. Our friendship suffered no shock, and we were much together after the war.

Just after the fall of the city President Lincoln came to Richmond. He came unannounced and his visit was almost like the flitting of a spirit in the air. No one knew that he was coming, few saw him while he was there, nor knew when he went away. There were no city authorities to welcome nor to refuse him welcome. There was no opportunity for popular demonstration and probably there would not have been any, for at that time the people were not in a notion for any dramatic loyalty. At the same time, of all the men of the North, not one commanded so much of the respect and the good-will of the people as did Abraham Lincoln. We respected him then and during the days of reconstruction—more bitter in some respects than the war itself—there were thousands who wished that Lincoln was at the head of the government, and as the years have come along with their softening and balancing touch, one point of strength in the restored union is the love and reverence felt in every section of the country for that man of sorrows and of strength, Abraham Lincoln.

A startling thing occurred in Richmond soon after the fall of the city. A day of mourning in honor of President Lincoln was appointed by the Washington authorities, and it was openly bruited about that Southern people were in sympathy with the assassin. This was

the most bitter sting that ever pierced the Southern heart. Our people had fought a clean, straight-out, honorable war, and the intimation that after we had grounded our arms we should be charged with approving the fatal deed of Booth, was like a poisoned dagger in the breasts of our people.

But Richmond arose to the occasion. One of her most chivalrous and intrepid citizens, Rev. Dr. J. Lansing Burrows, himself a native New Yorker, and pastor of one of the great churches of the city, announced that his church would observe the day of mourning. It brought a situation so complex, so strange, that it fairly shook the town. The day came and with it the people—the blue, the gray and the black filled the old First Baptist Church, and they heard perhaps the most majestic and courageous address that ever rang out from an American platform. The speaker had a word to say about the army of the Republic and gave it its rightful meed of praise; he spoke of the South, her convictions, her sacrifices, her disasters, her final sorrows. He spoke of Lincoln in well-chosen and sober words, giving him the tribute that not all felt at that time was his, but did it so delicately and so convincingly that there was general response. Then it was that the eloquent climax came. He took up the charge against the South as to its complicity in the death of Lincoln, and it is no exaggeration to say that the eloquence of that defense might rank with the finest passages in the greatest addresses by the chiefest orators of the world.

In ending this chapter it must be allowed me to describe two scenes upon which my eyes were allowed to look, and the memory of which abides undimmed in my soul to this very hour.

The first was the passing of the victorious Northern armies by my humble gate in the plain old town of Man-

chester as they were en route for Washington City to be disbanded. The first in the order of passing was the army of General Grant which finished its work at Appomattox, and which, after gathering its scattered forces, came through Richmond. I had the privilege of sitting upon my veranda and seeing this vast and admirably equipped army pass before me. It took it practically three full days to make the passage. I write at random and with no claim of official accuracy. It was said at the time that there were about one hundred and sixty-five thousand men in the line. It embraced all branches of the service and came through in full dress, as fine a pageant as mortal eyes ever looked upon. Every brigade had its band of music and hour after hour the tramp of infantry, the clatter of the cavalry, the dull thunder of the artillery and the steady beat of the drum made things at once picturesque and impressive. Not long after the passage of Grant's army, General Sherman's army came on from the South, and really seemed in all respects fully equal to the army of the Potomac. Perchance my vision was twisted some, but truly I can say that the military array was so imposing and tremendous, so significant of strength and power that I felt after all it was not so bad for the thinned and ragged and half-fed legions of the South to be overcome in a contest so unequal.

But I saw another sight in connection with Richmond's fall which I confess thrilled me a thousand times more than all the glory of the victorious armies of the Republic. It was a spectacle that broke upon me most unexpectedly ; it came while the heavens were black with storm and the streets were wild with flooding rains.

What I saw was a horseman. His steed was bespattered with mud, and his head hung down as if worn by long travelling. The horseman himself sat his horse like a master ; his face was ridged with self-respecting griefs ;

his garments were worn in the service and stained with travel ; his hat was slouched and spattered with mud and only another unknown horseman rode with him, as if for company and for love. Even in the fleeting moment of his passing by my gate, I was awed by his incomparable dignity. His majestic composure, his rectitude and his sorrow, were so wrought and blended into his visage and so beautiful and impressive to my eyes that I fell into violent weeping. To me there was only one where this one was ; there could be only one that day, and that one was still my own revered and cherished leader, stainless in honor, resplendent and immortal even in defeat, my own, my peerless chieftain, Robert E. Lee.

In that lone way, in the midst of rain and mire, with no crowds to hail him, with no resounding shouts to welcome him, with no banners flapping about him, did he come back from disastrous war. But, ah ! we did not know. Conquered and solitary he was, but yet he wore invisible badges of victory ; he carried spoils of honor and conquest which could never fail, and in every step of his sad moving he was marching forward to take his place in the palace courts of universal fame.

VII

A BRIEF SOJOURN IN BALTIMORE

AT the end of the Civil War the Franklin Square Baptist Church of Baltimore underwent a strain at once peculiar and acute. Its membership while doctrinally and spiritually harmonious was much divided on the issues of the war. They were largely Southern in association, sympathy and commercial interests; but quite a considerable element sided with the Federal Union and joined in the movement to crush secession. In spite of this fearful dissension the church moved along quite smoothly until the end came. Several young men of the church were in the Southern armies, and after the surrender of the Southern armies they returned to Baltimore and naturally enough attended the church of which they were members. Soon after their return the Lord's Supper was celebrated one Sunday morning and these young men, gladly enough, undertook to join in the solemn service. It so chanced that the church officer who waited upon that part of the congregation in which these young men sat was an uncompromising adherent of the Union, and in his eyes it seemed well-nigh sacrilegious for these young men who had fought against the Union to share in the privileges of the Supper.

Accordingly he took the matter into his own hands and without the least disguise of his motive withheld the bread and wine from these unrepentant rebels. This act on the deacon's part kindled a fierce excitement. It brought on a dissension so sharp and relentless that it split the church, with the result that the Southern ele-

ment in the membership proved to be by large odds the predominant party and the severe old deacon and his sympathizers walked out.

Naturally enough the victors turned their eyes towards Dixie when they came to select a pastor. Their choice fell upon me, but my inexperience joined with my devotion to my charge in Manchester caused me to decline the call. Nearly a year afterwards they repeated their offer of the pastorate and on the 17th of March, 1867, I was installed as the pastor of the Franklin Square Baptist Church. Of course I knew that my selection was due in no small part to the fact that I was a Southern man, and I could not forget that those who had quit the church on sectional grounds would eye me with disfavor, because I came at the bidding of those at whose hands they had suffered a disastrous defeat.

By the time I reached Baltimore the war had been over for nearly two years, and about all of the asperities which had lodged in my soul had taken their flight. I caught quite a number of wry glances from those who had gone out of the church, but I made no note of them, and felt rather sorry for the ill-used and dislodged brethren, and even went to see them, and by degrees had a good time with them. It was not very long before some of the choicest of my Baltimore friends were among these aliens, as they were somewhat reproachfully called, and I confess that it gave me unspeakable satisfaction to see some of them returning to the fold.

The church was not large but it was as choice a body of Christian people as I ever knew. They were cordial, harmonious, intelligent, and overflowing with kindness and helpfulness towards me. The location of the church and some defects in its construction were depressing to me, but I fully persuaded myself that I was the happiest being in all the earth, and that no other place on the

earth could ever tempt me to leave my homogeneous and fascinating little charge in the Monumental City. When letters began to come to me concerning the pastorate of the First Baptist Church in Petersburg, Va., I almost repelled them as impertinent and impossible. When however a committee with Col. David G. Potts as its chairman cornered me, and uncovered before me the magnificent opportunity which awaited me, and I saw with the fullest conviction that my duty was there, I verily believed that there never was and never could be a happier man than I was. I walked the mountain heights of rapture.

A Virginian is a stark fool to everybody else except to Virginians. Other people may feel as they please, but only a Virginian knows how a Virginian feels. I had fooled myself to death in believing that I was happy out of Virginia, but the spirit of about twelve generations of Virginians lay sullen and restless within me. It gave me time to enjoy my delusions for a season, but when the gateway of the Old Dominion flew open and I saw the track clear and straight before me, I felt that the millennium was at hand. All this may sound like idiotic prattle to the outsider, but let him rave. He doesn't understand it at all.

But let me be just to Baltimore. It put its hooks into me in a powerful fashion and has grappled me ever since. Not for one moment did I ever desire to live in Baltimore or anywhere else on this mortal sphere outside of Virginia, but Baltimore is great and unsurpassed in its hospitality, its public spirit and quenchless courage. Not one of all the ministers, resident there then, remains to greet me now. In those days the star of the Baltimore pulpits was Richard Fuller, kingly in form, the soul of eloquence, and preëminent among the sons of the South. To him I must devote a chapter.

VIII

RICHARD FULLER AS I SAW HIM

THE Southern Baptist Convention held its meeting in Richmond, Va., in May, 1859. The reader will recall I had been out of college just one year, and was pastor in Manchester. Then for the first time I saw the convention. What whetted my interest in the meeting was a Baptist caucus, if I may call it so, which I attended the day the convention opened. It was held in the Second Baptist Church of Richmond, and was composed of the Virginia delegates to the convention. It came out in the caucus that the Graves-Howell imbroglio, which was then at its acutest stage, was to lift its monstrous head in the coming convention, and we were asked to act together when the crisis came. We all agreed that we would vote for Dr. R. B. C. Howell for the presidency, as that seemed the bloody angle of the contention. I believe it was indicated to us that Dr. Howell would not serve if elected, but that in order to express sympathy with him we would vote for him and then he, in the interest of peace, after being sustained by the convention, would graciously retire. I being a novus homo of the smallest dimensions, and not only a stranger to fortune and to fame, but to nearly everybody else in the crowd, counted myself quite fortunate in finding a seat on the floor of the platform in front of the pulpit with my face towards the audience. It was all a raw and unmeasured occasion to me. I cast my vote and landed my man, and also heard Dr. Howell read a decidedly dull paper setting forth the pros and cons

of the vexatious situation. After action had been taken upon his declinature some man, whose name cannot be recalled, nominated Dr. Richard Fuller for the presidency. I would probably have felt a deeper interest in the election but for the fact that there was a stalwart man sitting by me with a mountainous head, an exceedingly rugged face, a shock of hair tousled to the point of confusion, and two of the most restless arms that I had ever seen attached to one man. I would have marked him for an untravelled mountaineer, but for his incomparable eyes. They shot and flashed and glowed almost to my terror. I could not think he was much of a somebody or he would not have been located on that comfortless seat. Presently it was announced that Dr. Fuller had been made president and he was summoned to the upper platform. The breath fairly took leave of my body when the rugged and restless stranger at my side rose to his feet and ascended to the pulpit. At once, even as gawky and untutored a sprig of the ministry as I was, I could see that the new president was ill at ease, and felt that he was entering strange waters. He ventured a few remarks, only one of which hung to the limbs of my mind, and that was to the effect that he intended to run the convention according to the new commandment,—a promise which he verily kept, though it was to the undoing of about all the parliamentary laws invented up to that time. The body adjourned just after his election and it was bruited about that the kingly old doctor spent the entire night in brooding over Jefferson's Manual, thus seeking to fit himself for his official responsibilities.

It is with all reverence and with an admiration for the man, that I here put it on record that I believe that he was the most wretched presiding officer that I ever saw at the head of a great body and nothing but his imperturbable humor and his exhaustless graciousness saved

the body from anarchy. One brother arose and raised a point of order, stating it in quite an involved and equivocal way and Dr. Fuller, after looking at him blankly and helplessly, said, "My dear brother, will you not in the interest of the kingdom we love withdraw that matter?" It was evident that the doctor didn't know what to do about it, and the disgruntled brother after a little remonstrance solved the situation by taking the thing back.

A Scotchman, amiable, a lover of peace and a little given to flying off at a tangent, offered a resolution to the effect that we must all pray for the Baptist editors. It was a time when they needed to be prayed for. They were given in those days to pitiless personalities and all sorts of acrimonious conflicts. Dr. Fuller did not know what to do with the motion, and he stood for well-nigh a minute, a very king in his grandeur and finally said, "Well, now, my dear Brother Francis, we will think about that matter." The convention burst into convulsions and Brother Francis and his motion went down unwept. At many points the convention came to the verge of disaster. The two elements were full of passion and not a few of them eager for the fray. Dr. Fuller's great soul, filled with spiritual mastery, floated the convention on peaceful seas, guarding against every rising storm and after all brought things to a nobler conclusion than any rigid parliamentarian could possibly have done. On Sunday morning Dr. Fuller preached his imperial sermon on "Thomas" in the pulpit of the First Baptist Church. Possibly excepting his matchless sermon on "The lifting up of Christ" at the opening of the convention in Baltimore when he was a younger man, he never preached so powerfully as he did at that time in Richmond. I as a pastor in Manchester could not of course hear him, but I could hear hardly anything else during the rest of the convention but what people were

saying about the sermon. He was pictorial, vivid, agile, reckless, thrilling and irresistible. Some of his pictures fairly lifted the people from their seats and I can truly say that for thirty years the people who heard that sermon never ceased to talk about it. Next to that I should say that his sermon on "The everlasting kingdom" at Raleigh, N. C., at the time the convention met there was the most eloquent and effective. It was there that he drew with a master's hand the picture of the angel flying with the everlasting Gospel, in the midst of which he cried in his rich and charming voice, "Fly faster, fly faster, oh, angel, fly faster." (Just before the sermon the news had gone forth of the death of Dr. A. M. Poindexter of Virginia, one of the most passionate and sterling preachers in all the South and the people were profoundly afflicted by the death of such an illustrious man.)

Dr. Fuller, instinct with eloquence, wild in the very abandon of his speech, after seeking to cheer the angel onward to speedier flight, stopped for a second as if disappointed and said: "But oh, angel, if you cannot fly faster, call Poindexter, newly arrived in the realms of glory, give him the message and bid him take it around the world."

That strain of eloquence rang through the South like a charge to the Lord's host. People talked of it everywhere. Preachers told about it in the pulpit. Again and again it went the rounds of the papers and even to the present time you may meet in going through the South some white-haired man who will tell you of Fuller's great sermon at Raleigh. It is no reproach to say that Fuller had his varying moods. He was not always at his best, though justice would be offended if I did not say that those who heard him the most set him, far above all comers, the unrivalled chieftain in the kingdom of speech. When I accepted the call to the pastorate in Balti-

more it quite surprised me that a number of men volunteered to warn me against Dr. Fuller. They said that he was aristocratic, exclusive, had no sympathy with young men and that I might look out. Several men who had been pastors in Baltimore told me how they went to Baltimore largely with the thought of catching the spirit and sharing the fellowship of Dr. Fuller, but that they found him inaccessible and quite a lot of other things that had made them quite sick. In some way the warning did not fall very forcibly on me. I was a young and obscure thing and was going to what was practically a suburban church and I had never thought of Dr. Fuller and myself on the same day. I didn't expect him to take much notice of me and would indeed have been rather embarrassed if I had thought I would be brought into any active contact with him. To one of these brethren I recall that I said bluntly that I did not expect to sleep with Dr. Fuller when I got to Baltimore and that I was sure that I would expect nothing of him that he did not choose to do for me. It was in this mood that I went to Baltimore feeling myself only a young colt and with no conscious desire to be yoked with the great Baptist lion of America.

After reaching Baltimore I was very solemnly warned by a demonstrative brother not to expect anything of Dr. Fuller or else I was doomed to humiliating disappointments.

They had quite an imposing welcome service at Franklin Square soon after I entered upon my work there. When they handed me a copy of the programme I found that Dr. Fuller was the magna pars of the occasion. He preached the sermon,—strong, stirring and full of grace and he dropped in several kindly references to the young Virginian which, in spite of my evident duty to feel that he was against me, had quite a genial and gladdening

tone. It did make me feel that possibly after all he would not be hopelessly cruel in his treatment of me, though I was in no expectant mood and therefore not a candidate for disappointment.

A few weeks after my work began, the servant came to my study with a card and on it was the name of Richard Fuller. Naturally enough I thought that if he had anything against me doomsday had come, but with no conscious misgiving I entered the parlor and I verily believe that the most unique, interesting, heart-warming handshake that up to that time had come to me was that given by Dr. Fuller. There was not too much of it and not too little,—just enough to make it feel inexpressibly refreshing. His way of calling me “Brother Hatcher” was peculiar and I was foolish enough to feel that there were warmth, sincerity and possibly some love back of it. He talked to me about the preachers in Baltimore and had a good word for every one of them. By degrees he veered around to Franklin Square. I had been told that he was not a friend of Franklin Square and that if I hustled too vigorously in the interest of that church I might feel the stroke of his antagonism. He told me the church had good people in it, had a good location, a good future. He did not promise me anything and in no measure did he seek to coddle me.

The visit was not long and he ended it rather suddenly by saying that he would like for us to pray together. Not that I was asked to take any open part in the praying and for that matter it did not occur to me that I would. But oh, that prayer! In its beauty and ardor and tenderness it might have gone for a poem. It was uttered in a low voice, a voice that trembled with emotion more than once, and it asked the Lord to do some things for me that I hadn’t thought of, and which I felt I would be the gladdest in the world if the Lord only would.

When he regained his feet, he gave me his hand,—another memorable grasp, and moved out of the room with not another word.

Now I may have been a young fool,—possibly I was. It may be that my country-born soul had some impulses of pride that this eminent man had done me the honor of coming to see me. I may have been deceitful enough to be glad that after all the warnings that had been handed me unsought, the doctor had actually come to see me. But to the best of my soul's truthfulness I do not believe that any of those feelings were things of consciousness with me. I am sure I never told any one of the men who warned me anything that would have suggested that Fuller had been better to me than he had been to them. But let me say with all frankness that that visit had in it so much of a man and was so courtly, so delicate, so free from patronage and so rich in brotherly cheer that I could have gone out on the hills and shouted all by myself.

I never went to Dr. Fuller's home, though I am sure that he invited me to come to see him. I wasn't afraid to go and yet it looked like it wasn't worth while. I was afraid that I might break in some time when his great brain was running on full time and interrupt him. But let me say in justice to myself that whenever there was an opening I made it a point to approach him and never in any case found him in any wise but cordial and accessible.

It was generally understood that Dr. Fuller was at times reticent and impatient. He could not bear interruption when he was closely engaged. He had a lordly eminence and many sought his notice for the glory of being noticed, and he was also reputed to be extremely rich and the path to his door was kept hot by the swift feet of mendicants. People broke in upon him at all times; his hospitality was sought by those who had no claim

and even on the street he was waylaid and besieged by those who desired his influence or his bounty. It is possible that these things touched his nerves and made him irritable. It must be admitted too that Fuller had the kingly nature. He felt himself apart from the common herd and thought himself justified in repelling offensive intruders. He looked upon his time as the most valuable part of his capital, and those who would rob him of that he sometimes treated as enemies. I heard occasional hints that his table was not easily accessible. I believe that it was said that his wife during much of her life was frail and he guarded her against the undue oppression of company. All of these things may have served to color in some measure the charges of the disappointed that he was cross, exclusive and disagreeable. As a fact all men of greatness have to hedge themselves about for self-protection and they have a right to do it. Mr. Spurgeon himself the soul of hospitality and the ardent lover of his race had only certain hours when the gates of his welcome were unlocked and even the average pastor is constrained to economize his time and draw lines against the public.

Yet Richard Fuller was a man for company. He had an almost inexhaustible fund of humor. His anecdotes were innumerable; his dramatic talent was of the highest order and there were times when he fairly sold himself to laughter and to fun. His power of retort was usually on duty and was a thing of terror to those who once provoked it.

On one occasion I took part with him in the anniversary of a young men's society in the First Baptist Church. Dr. J. W. M. Williams, for many years pastor of that church, and a most laborious and useful minister, could not let an occasion pass without seeking to crack his jokes at the expense of his illustrious old neighbor.

The name of the society that was celebrating was "The Pastor's Body-Guard," and the schedule called for three speeches, one from myself, one from Fuller and one from Dr. Williams. I was scared to the very marrow in my bones by the presence of Dr. Fuller; I was a young foolish thing anyway and had never been on the platform with him before. Indeed I suppose I was put on to fill up and they worked me off early in the action. I blew my tremulous little bugle and shrank out of notice.

Then came Fuller in one of the most exquisite, fitting, soul-moving addresses that my ear ever heard or my soul ever feasted upon. I had never heard anything from him or from anybody that surpassed it. His theme, responsive to the name of the society, was "How to Guard the Pastor" and he spoke of the pastor's body, the pastor's feelings, the pastor's name and the pastor's usefulness, telling in aptest phrase how to guard him. The miracle of the address was in his adroit and delicate commendation of the pastor. Even after all these years it seems to me at this moment that I never heard a man so delicately praised and so beautifully exalted as was Dr. Williams by that address.

Then it was that Dr. Williams took the platform in his brusque and offhand way. "I see," said he, "that you have me down for an address to-night, but I beg to inform you that you will not get it and that for two reasons; first because I have no address and second because you have already had enough, and what you have had was good. Both of your speakers have given good addresses; indeed I can say of both of them that they have made the finest addresses that I have ever heard from them before in my life. This may not mean so much in Brother Hatcher's case as I never heard him before, but he is all right; but I can say the same of Dr. Fuller. His was the best address by far that I ever heard from

him in my life, and the best because the shortest. To tell the truth, Dr. Fuller, I never heard you make a short address before. I never read of you making a short address and no friend of yours ever chanced to mention to me that he had heard you make a short address; but actually you have made a short address to-night,—the shortest I ever heard you make and your shortest is the best.”

There was a swing and dash in the way Williams put it that rather pleased the crowd and provoked considerable laughter. For my part I thought that it was a little too decided in its critical feature. But I supposed that Fuller would let it pass unnoticed. Believe it not! After just enough seconds had elapsed for people to feel the silence Dr. Fuller said, “Ah, Williams, I understand you perfectly. My address to-night was best in your sight because it praised you the most.”

It was the fall of a trip-hammer. The old Round Top Church was nigh on to shaking with the effect of Fuller’s unpitying retort. The incident fell with a slightly grating effect upon me if not upon others, though the sympathy went to Fuller and the laugh was on Williams. Now, Dr. Fuller was dramatic to a fault. A distinguished woman said that Dr. Fuller was an actor by nature and practice, and that she rather thought that in the long run the practice got the better of nature, by which I suppose she meant that Dr. Fuller’s acting became an art in which, she said, she sometimes caught him. He was superb indeed in his moments of highest inspiration in fitting his actions to his thoughts, sometimes indeed staying his words and communicating with his audience almost exclusively through his performances. A rare bit of the dramatic came out later on in the meeting mentioned above at the First Church. There was a collection for the benefit of the society in whose interest

the services were held. As the collectors came up the aisle Dr. Fuller said in a way all his own, "Young man, bring your basket this way," which, of course, the young man hastened to do. Dr. Fuller kept him waiting long enough to attract attention, and then slowly thrusting his fingers into his vest pocket, he pulled out something and held it up rather conspicuously. "What I hold in my hand," he said, "gives me trouble. Just before I left home to-night a plain and rather sorrowful looking man came to my house and asked for me. When I entered the parlor I found that he had a woman with him, and with evident signs of confusion he told me that they desired to be married. I had my opinion as to the wisdom of such a proceeding on their part, but their ripened age and notable lonesomeness of manner forestalled any objections I might make, and so I pronounced the word which turned twain into one. I followed them to the door when they left, to show them out and in the good-bye hand-shake of the man he left this piece of money in my hand. I really felt that he needed it more, in view of his new burden, than I did, but he got away without my returning it. It is almost like conscience money to me and I think that I will feel better to get rid of it."

With that he dropped the note into the basket. Chafed and chagrined as Dr. Williams had been by his very recent passage with the doctor, he felt that he was willing to try it again, and so in a tone of well dissembled rebuke he told the doctor that he ought not to have taken the money and emphasized it with many added and vehement words.

Dr. Fuller dropped his eyes and looked momentarily guilty and for exactly the requisite number of seconds Williams chuckled with exultant glee. "Well, Brother Williams," he said, "I thought of that and for a time I felt impelled to refuse to take the money, but then it oc-

curred to me that if I did that it would go abroad that I was marrying people without the price and I knew that your people would hear of it and that your occupation would be gone."

Not Garrick at his best could have uttered and acted the thing more inimitably than Fuller did it. The effect was electric. The crowd fairly shouted in their extravagant laughter and Fuller was the master of the field.

I met Dr. Fuller a number of times while a member of the Executive Board of the Maryland Baptists, and once or twice we sat together. It would hardly be too much to say that during the dull routine parts of the meeting the doctor ran a little entertainment of his own. His ludicrous comments, his playful "asides," and sometimes his scathing satires amply filled the lonesome spaces of the evening. When, however, a matter of living interest arose to the attention of the company he was alert, quick with good suggestions and eager to help on the cause. Perhaps the most memorable sight I had of Dr. Fuller was when at one of these meetings he was convulsed with laughter. At that time the white and the negro Baptists worked together and there belonged to the Board a venerable, consequential and exceedingly self-complacent old negro preacher. The point under discussion was as to the starting of another negro church, not very far from the location of this old minister's church. He was asked to give his opinion as to the advisability of the new enterprise. He spoke in outright opposition to the movement, and by his intense antagonism excited the resentment of one of the white members of the Board.

"That's the way with Baltimore Baptists," said the irate member. "They all want the whole hog. Their motto is to get everything and give nothing. Their church is the centre and everything must come that way."

It was a stunning blow, whether deserved or not, but

the old negro pastor rose to the occasion and, with towering indignation, he made reply, "My church, I want you all to know, is no jail ; we got no chains to fasten our members down. De principul on which I has my church to work is dat every man is lef to act accordin' to his own indervidual discrepancy."

The thing dropped red-hot from his lips and fell with a weight of full twelve pounds. The peals of laughter dissolved the tensity of the moment, and none went higher in peals of hilarity than Dr. Fuller. He might act but there was a great responsive soul in him that was touched by every throb of human life.

I must admit that the doctor was rather pitiless in his jokes at the expense of others,—sometimes cruelly so, I thought.

I was invited to address a young men's association in the Seventh Church of which Dr. Fuller was then the pastor. I selected the very formidable theme :—"Self-Appreciation," and naturally enough I had something to say about defective, and yet more about excessive, self-appreciation and naturally enough had made some attempts at least to hit off certain phases of the excessive self-appreciation of young men. I sat down in a sick perspiration and free at least from any danger of over-appreciating myself for a good while to come, for it was simply impossible for me to feel that anything I could possibly say was fit to say in the presence of Dr. Fuller.

As I took my seat some man, unbefriended by organ or piano, attempted to start a hymn. He hit it in the wrong place and it wouldn't go ; he tried it on another key, got it wrong, quivered, bawled, balked, and tumbled into silence. Dr. Fuller broke the oppression and nearly broke the heart of the man by saying, "Just one more case of excessive self-appreciation." Truly it was the barbarism of humor, but the inhumanity of man

was amply manifested in the uproarious laughter with which the doctor's remark was followed.

During my pastorate at the Franklin Square Church quite a number of families from the Seventh Church decided to come to Franklin Square. In every case, so far as I can recall, I suggested that they would not apply for their letters without first making known their purpose to Dr. Fuller. They acted upon my counsel, and they brought me delightful reports as to the warmth with which he encouraged them to come up and help Brother Hatcher build up Franklin Square. One or two of these families were prominent and wealthy and devoted friends of Dr. Fuller, and yet they assured me that Dr. Fuller bade them get their letters and come to our help. I say this all the more willingly because there was an impression made that Dr. Fuller thought more of his own church than he did of the Baptist cause in Baltimore. I understood well enough that it was not for myself as a matter of personal partiality that he did this, but for a denomination of which he was not only a princely member, but an ardent lover.

IX

SEVEN YEARS IN PETERSBURG

IT was a curious conviction which landed me in the city of Petersburg. My Baltimore pastorate was almost ideal in its comforts, its congenialities and its outlook. It was a small charge but a choice people and they commanded my heart.

I dare not use the word "success" in connection with any part of my life. I am so vexed even in the fairest recollections of my work, by my ever-deepening sense of inadequacy and unfaithfulness, that I am afraid to admit, even to myself, that I could safely speak of my success in any of the graver undertakings of my life. I can say, however, that my joy in my labors which I wrought in Petersburg, under the powerful conviction that carried me there, was something closely akin to bliss itself. I look back now and think of the people, not a half dozen of whom still remain on the earth, who welcomed me when I went there; but how could I ever forget them? There was Col. David G. Potts, a gentleman in every fibre of his being, flawless in his loyalty to his young pastor, and almost riotous in the spending of his money in the interest of his church and his Lord. And surely there was never a more helpful or delightful woman in any church than was the wife of this glorious Christian worker. There, too, were deacons B. F. Robinson and Frank Robertson with their devout and consecrated families. There were the Ropers,—Leroy Roper, an ardent lover of his church but without public gifts, and his devoted sons, Emmett and Bartlett, who lived and

toiled so nobly with me. There was Mrs. Thomas Wallace and her sister, Mrs. Fisher, whose courage and loyalty almost made the church at the first, and whose lives adorned it, and whose deaths glorified it. Then there were the Clements, the Lehmeyers, the Steels, and many more whose memories are unspeakably precious to me, and who stood at the gate to welcome me and stood by me until my task was done. Nor can I forget the hundreds who joined the church during my pastorate, too many to mention here, and yet of them I must not fail to mention the Sewards, the Budds, the Woodys, the Bonds, the Whitlys, the Garlands and ever so many more whose devotion and Christian ardor gave brightness to my life, and added immeasurably to the strength and effectiveness of the service which I rendered the church. I believe that I could say that I never suffered the pang of any wounding word that was spoken to me during my Petersburg pastorate by any member of the church. If I could give freedom to my pen it would sketch scores of the choicest of earth that entered into the constituency of that church, on whose strength I leaned, on whose bounty I feasted, and on whose memories I find it sadly sweet often to dwell.

Petersburg itself is a unique and notable city. Its people constitute its glory. They are almost preëminent for hospitality, friendliness and happy consideration for their pastors. My pastorate connected me by strong Christian ties with Norfolk and Portsmouth, and all that tide country of southern Virginia, on the borders of which Petersburg stood.

While pastor at Petersburg, I was a member of a local missionary body, called the Portsmouth Association. It was not very long after the war, and many of our churches had not recovered from the shock and wreck of the war, which so thoroughly devastated that part of Virginia.

One morning the clerk of the association was calling the roll of churches and when he cried the name of Shiloh, the curt old moderator said, "Don't call Shiloh ; Shiloh is dead." Under a painful impulse I sprang to my feet.

"What is that?" I asked, with excited feeling. "Shiloh dead? There is something awfully contradictory in talking about the death of Shiloh. When did she die? What was the matter with her? How long was she sick? Who waited on her during her illness? Where was she buried? Have any flowers been planted around her grave? Any monument built for her?"

The moderator did not seem to be noticeably sympathetic with my interruption of the roll-call, and said that he thought it would be very well to appoint the brother to visit the grave of the dead church.

"No, sir!" I replied, hotly. "I would be afraid to go. I am somewhat superstitious and believe in ghosts, and if I were to go to the grave of a dead church, I would expect to see the dance of devils in full operation around the tomb."

Another man arose and expressed the hope that a committee would be appointed, and they appointed myself and that friend of my soul, Rev. A. E. Owen, then a young man but afterwards one of the most distinguished ministers in that part of Virginia, to visit the neighborhood and to preach the doctrine of the Resurrection. I had no thought as to the location of the extinct church, and was surprised to find that it was not far from the city of Petersburg. The following summer we determined to visit the neighborhood and sent a notice out to that effect. The reply came back that the church was utterly extinct and the house in ruins. Word was returned that we were coming just the same. Then another report came back that "the community was too poor to support a protracted meeting." To that, answer was given that we

would bring our own rations and take care of ourselves. I was to leave the city at six o'clock on Monday morning, go out twenty miles, be entertained at breakfast, and driven to the church.

It so happened that my associate could not go and I found it necessary to go alone. Meanwhile, the good citizens had been greatly chagrined that such ill-born reports had been sent out from the neighborhood and they were put on their mettle. In good time my young friend drove me through the woods to the old church and a great surprise awaited me. True, the building itself had a look of neglect and bore many marks of dilapidation, but the yard had been nicely cleaned up, ever so many lunch tables had been built beneath the trees and the yard was dotted with groups of men who were there to attend the service. I sprang out of the buggy and walked to the side door of the house, near which a group of men were standing.

"Good-morning, gentlemen," I said, without waiting for any word of greeting or introduction. "I am a minister of Jesus Christ ; I hear that the church at this place is dead and I have come to sound the trumpet of life and the resurrection. If any of you have a welcome for me, I would like to grasp your hand."

With simple but hearty cordiality they pressed around me and introduced one another to me.

As soon as the hand-shake was over, I stepped up into the side door. The house was more than half full of ladies and I struck at once the hymn "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing," using the old-time tune of Greenville and sang the first stanza as a solo, which, if not melodious, was manifestly enough exciting—sang it as I went from the door to the pulpit and was setting down my baggage and pulling off my linen duster. Before beginning the second stanza I invited others to join in, but

there was such an eager inrush of men that the second stanza got very little beyond a solo. Then I stopped and told them to stand up and sing the last stanza. The last one of them seemed to know it and the rusty old shingles on the roof fairly rattled under the power of the choral song. Good people of all names and from several neighborhoods were there. We had all-day meetings up to Friday evening. I got on the track of only three of the former members of the church, one a venerable woman no longer able to travel, the second an epileptic and the third had denied the faith. On Saturday morning I counted up those who handed in their names for a new organization and they footed up fifty-six.

A little afterwards the other brother of the committee, Rev. Mr. Owen, and others went with me out to the constitution of the church and Shiloh had come again. The fruits of that meeting were rich to a wondrous degree. Not only did the church reorganize, but it became strong, united and great-hearted, and from it went out young men and young women who became eminent in commerce, in education, in the learned professions and in Christian service.

It was but a little part that I was allowed to have in the remaking of the church, for I was whipped off in other directions and never was there afterwards, but I heard of its beautiful house of worship, of the glad light which it was shedding far and wide and met many of its scattered sons as I went, hither and thither, in the discharge of the happy duties of my ministry.

Not very long after the Civil War, and while pastor at Petersburg, I attended a great gathering in the county of Sussex, Va., held with the old Antioch Baptist Church. At that time, foreign missions was at a low ebb in the South. The people were impoverished, they had little or

no literature, their churches were sorely strained to keep up expenses, money was scarce, and, as a fact, very many of the churches were making no offerings for missionary purposes. A request came that a collection for missionary purposes should be taken and I was requested to ask for the rather pitiable sum of \$100, though many at that time thought it would be impossible to get the money. The appeal was made and we found that we had \$97. There was a rugged, over-candid old gentleman, a member of that church, who was an avowed opponent of foreign missions. He sat on the front bench and maintained a ferocious silence during the effort to get the money. Some one said that we must not stop until the whole amount was made up and I said, under a momentary impulse, that I was going to spend the night with this old gentleman and that I would get the rest of the money from him. His retort was almost in the nature of a taurine bellow. His face flamed with fury.

"I would like to see anybody get anything from me for foreign missions," he said with the thundering emphasis of finality.

"All right," I replied cheerily, "I will let you take a look at that neat operation to-night."

When I arrived at his gate, in company with others, it was raining heavily and he appeared on his veranda and gave the party a royal welcome, adding that he would be glad to see me—only on the condition that I would say nothing about the three dollars. I stopped at the gate and, turning to the friend who had brought me, I asked if he would take me to another place and he said that he would. I said to the old man with utmost good humor but with very distinct earnestness that I bade him good-night, as I did not feel willing to accept his hospitality under such an invitation. Instantly he sprang from the porch and with good-will withdrew the condition, giving

me full liberty to talk about whatever I chose, and reserving to himself the right to do as he felt proper under any appeal that I might make. I felt that I had scored on the spot and we gathered in the parlor and for an hour had an almost roistering case of old Virginia hospitality. Everything was fitted for entertainment to the nicest point, and the company entered with ardor into the joys of the evening.

In due course supper was announced and about twenty or more of us sat down to a table literally loaded with all the choice things that that fruitful part of Virginia could afford. The meal went off with famous success and in some way, probably by a little electioneering on my part, I became the organ for expressing the gratitude of the company to the host for his rare entertainment. I spoke of the riches of the provision, the elegance of the feast, the reign of hospitality and so on, and closed by saying that as I thought of the uncounted millions of the earth who had never had a crumb of the Bread of Life, I wondered that there could be a man in the world that had anything, that would not give it for carrying the light of heaven to the children of darkness. The old farmer flared up on the spot. His retort was noisy, decidedly sarcastic and very sarcastically decided.

Soon the company gathered in the large country parlor and the three dollar business was called up. I worked in the best I knew of what was being done for foreign missions and thought I was gravelling in the neighborhood of the old gentleman's soul, but when I finished he said with withering audacity, "You talk well, young man, but it is like pouring water on a duck's back ; the duck does not get wet." I think it is barely possible that I hinted that the same thing might be said of a goose but that I did not believe that the remark would be in order. A little chat ran around the room for a few minutes, and I

put in a few remarks on the luxury of liberality, working in quite a number of incidents, and there was a manifest tenderness in the group, a natural sort of a response to the appeal hidden in my utterances.

There was another explosion ; the hard shell of the old brother remained uncracked, and once more he told me that he thought that in the course of time I might become a great orator and a good lecturer on "Liberality," but that however liberal he might become, he would never give a cent to foreign missions. The laugh at my expense was free and full, and I had grave doubts as to the issue of the appeal. After a while I started off in pursuit of a few misers that I had known. There were several of them, and their covetousness was of the idolatrous order, and I set up those cases one after the other with all the pictorial glare and gloom that I could mix together. When I ended the old man proposed that we go to bed. I respectfully declined and the company joined with me in begging that, as that company was never together before, and would never be again, we might drive ahead. The old gentleman picked up the Bible and came over to me and asked me to conduct the evening devotions. I thought a moment or two with my eyes to the floor and, looking up, said to him, "I beg that you will put this duty upon some one else ; I cannot do it."

"Why not?" he demanded.

"Because," said I, soberly, "if I conduct this worship, I will have to pray for you, and I would be forced to ask the Lord to incline you to do what you solemnly say you will not do, and I think you would regard the prayer as out of keeping with the occasion. I beg you to excuse me."

The change which came over him was absolutely startling. He stood with the Bible on his arm in silence long drawn out, and finally said that things had never come to

quite such a pass with him before, and I told him that I regretted to be an occasion of embarrassment to him.

Presently he broke into confused laughter.

"Hatcher," he said, with his characteristic brusqueness, "I care little for three dollars; it would not hurt me to give it, and I would not mind giving it to you after your great appeal for it, except that I know you would go from one end of the country to the other telling as you went how you tackled old Ben Prince, a shaggy old hard-shell Baptist, and wrung money out of him for foreign missions."

"My brother," said I with a seriousness which I deeply felt, "you mistake my mood. What I have done to-night has been done with a purpose which I believe heaven will approve. I want you to give something for the conversion of the lost world and not to please me, and if you give it I pledge myself before these witnesses that I will never mention it to a human being as long as I live on the earth without your consent."

There the matter halted and the conversation revived and became general, except that my old antagonist had become significantly silent. Presently he left the room, and after quite a long absence he walked in and threw three one dollar notes into my lap. The quiet of God seemed to be upon him.

"There is the money," he said, as it dropped into my lap, "and now I hope that you are willing to pray for me."

There was an unmistakable quiver in his voice as he spoke.

"Yes, indeed, my brother," I said, "I can pray for you now; give me the Bible and I believe that God will hear us as we call."

Not in all my life have I ever known a season of social worship so remarkable as that was. It amounted to a

revival. It looked as if every one present was under a peculiar spell, and my good, contentious old friend became like a little child in his gentleness. After the prayer we had a song, mellow, tender, refreshing, and the company quietly dispersed for the night.

The next morning the carriages were at the door to take us back to the meeting. As I was leaving the porch for the gate the old man touched me and asked that he might have a word with me in the parlor.

"You made me a promise last night," he said.

"Yes, I did," I replied, "and you need not fear that it will be broken."

"I want to release you from it," he said. "I give you full liberty to tell it, if you ever wish to tell it, and I think perhaps you ought to tell it; it may help the cause which you seem to love so well."

The next morning at the meeting I arose and, in simple, grateful terms, announced that Brother Prince had given the rest of the money and the \$100 had been made up. The announcement swept like a wave of light over the crowd, for the old man bowed his head as I spoke.

That morning another commission was laid on me to visit a church that had gone down. About the time this action was taken a messenger came into the house, saying that I was needed for some purpose out in the yard. Out I went, and as I was leaving the door I heard my name called. It was my old friend of the three dollars. He came up and put his arm around my shoulder.

"Hatcher," he said, "you go look after that church, and if they need anything, you give it to them and let me know and I will square the bill."

During this same pastorate, Dr. A. E. Owen and myself held a delightful revival meeting with the Newville Baptist Church in Sussex County, Virginia. In that church

I found a most eccentric and yet a really excellent man by the name of Albert Chappell. He was far advanced in life, moderately prosperous in fortune, happy in his family, odd and careless in his dress and quite amply stocked with projects and prejudices which sometimes set him off to disadvantage. The neighborhood honored the old gentleman but had its merry jests at his expense. He was bent in form, twisted in movement, destitute of one hand and yet possessed of a grim and winsome humor which largely atoned. He told me once that he had his breakfast the year round at four o'clock in the morning, but that he had usually quit his bed at two for a long time, but now he got so tired staying in bed that he was often out at midnight and lately he rose at eleven. When asked what he did with himself he said that he usually strolled over his farm, and looked around to see that his stock and fowls were not disturbed. It was said of him that he had had nearly every bone in his body broken and an unscrupulous wag reported that he went to sleep on his porch one night and rolled down the steps breaking his neck in two places, but that he was out before day the next morning and was doing quite well under the circumstances. He came into my study in Petersburg one day grunting and rubbing his knees, and with many other signs of bodily wretchedness. I asked him what was the matter and he gave the following account of his trouble.

“My old lady got me in a notion last week to go down the country to see our married daughter. She’s a mighty fine ole ’oman, always good to me, and I like to do whatever she asks me when I can; so I hitched up the carriage and got in and as we had to go sixteen miles I thought I would fix things so we could enjoy ourselves. I tied the reins to my stump” (his handleless arm), “thinking it ought to do somethin’ for its own support. We went jogging along till we got to the branch below our

house. There'd been a powerful rain and washed out the bed and when the horses jumped in, de reins juck'd me over the spatter board and landed me down between the horses' hind legs and de carriage wheels. 'Git up,' I cried to the horses as I saw 'em backin' and away they started and here come the carriage wheels across my knees. The lines stretched like they'd pull my stump off. 'Whoa. Back, back I tell yer,' and here come de horses' hind feet like dey goin' to mash me. 'Git up, I tell yer,' I hollered for life and here come the wheels and they pulled on my stump. It was git up and back ; back and git up until the ole lady jumped out and cut dem lines and jerked me bodily out, and I tell yer it looked like the very jints in my knees got mashed—they ached so."

I asked him what became of his trip.

"Oh, I went," he said. "The old lady had to go but I tell yer my bones ached with every turn of the wheel and it seemed to get worse after I got to my daughter's. The second day I hitched up and pulled for home and I ain't had no peace since. It looked like I break my knees every time I walk." And yet he had driven full thirty miles that day in the buggy. He was of the old school type but a true lover of the Lord.

When the great memorial movement in favor of Richmond College was on I received a letter from the pastor at Newville urging me to come down and take the collection for the college. He mentioned particularly that Brother Chappell was a fierce antagonist of Richmond College and was throwing his influence against any collection that might be proposed. I went down to the Saturday meeting at Newville and saw at once that the old brother eyed me askance and bore himself in a crusty and offish way. His greeting was evidently begrudged and so I shied off from him and gave him time to soften. Sun-

day morning his face wore the sternness of the warrior, and he seemed to be busy button-holing the brethren and evidently on the war-path. When I arose to speak he turned on the bench and gave me the advantage of his sharp, crooked, bended back instead of the light of his countenance. He pointedly ignored me, but my address was on Baptist history that day. Every now and then some fact or doctrinal reference of mine would please him and unconsciously his eyes would turn my way, but almost instantly he would recover himself and his face would be the other way again. As I moved along, his friendly turns in my direction became more frequent and his interest in my address was steadily deepening, though occasionally he would wheel himself away in a contemptuous manner as if trying to suppress me.

After a while, however, I unfolded some strain of thought which toppled him completely over. He joined heartily in the humor of it and faced me as if he was done with the conflict. From that time he laughed and cried with the crowd and was evidently fully aligned with the occasion. I came to the appeal for money and as soon as I mentioned it a simple-hearted brother, ever responsive to good appeals, a man who looked upon giving as the chief luxury of life, cried out, "Put me down for fifty dollars." I thanked him but said to him that if he would allow it I would prefer that the first gift should be made by Brother Albert Chappell.

"How do you know I am going to give anything?" he asked with a laugh.

"Oh," said I, "you have been converted. I saw how cross and ugly you were at the start, how you turned your back on me and how mean you were trying to be, but I saw you peeping around and saw when you came plump over. You are going to give and I want you to give now."

The old brother joined the crowd in its kindly laughter and said, "I'll give you twenty dollars just to get rid of you."

"Add to that," I said, "five dollars for each one of your children"—he was blessed with quite a number—"and I will let you off on one condition."

"What is that?"

"That the church appoint you," I replied, "as a delegate to the great memorial meeting in Richmond and that you will promise if there is a deficiency when we get there you will help to make it up."

"Go ahead," he said, "and if you appoint me I will be there."

He was appointed on the spot and was one of the early arrivals at the memorable meeting.

During the progress of that great convention I heard a man calling me on the street and it proved to be my whimsical and kind-hearted Brother Chappell.

"How much would it cost me to send Fuller to Richmond College?" he gasped out as he ran up to me.

"Hello!" said I. "What's that? You hate Richmond College, so I have been told."

"I thought I did," he said, "but since I got up here and have seen it all, I want Fuller to go there. He is my baby boy; mighty bright and I'd be real proud to have him in the college."

A new warmth for the old brother melted my heart, but I could not refrain from bantering him a bit. "If you wish to send Fuller to college in a penurious and skin-flint way, it would not cost you very much, but I wouldn't have anything to do with it. I hardly think I would speak to him when I went over there. But if you will fix him up right and send him in a gentlemanly way I'll bring him over, start him in and treat him as my boy."

"All right," he said, "I'll have him up in Petersburg for you and I will expect you to do right by the boy."

The old man was proud out of measure when he committed the boy to my keeping and he thought that Richmond College was about next door to the New Jerusalem. For a long time he thought that he hated Richmond College,—a baseless prejudice which melted away like snow in June as soon as he changed his standpoint. It is bad enough to be the victim of a genuine prejudgment but to fool ourselves with imaginary hatreds is ridiculous and deplorable. The old man has gone the way of the earth and I always think of him as one who was spoiled in the making. He never became the man he might have been and yet he was real and true, and faithful so far as he knew.

About this time I attended the Southern Baptist Convention which met in Augusta, Ga., and was very charmingly entertained in the home of Judge J. C. C. Black, at that time a member of the United States Congress. During dinner one day he said to me that there was a gentleman attending the convention, a resident of Georgia but a native of Virginia who knew me and was very anxious to meet me. It was agreed he would bring us together. After dinner I went to the church for the afternoon session. Entering the lecture room I was greeted by a well-rounded, striking looking gentleman with the question, "Do you know me?"

I looked him over with an honest desire to identify him, but I had to tell him plainly that I did not remember him.

He seemed a trifle mortified and asked me if I could remember ever having met a youth by the name of Walter Boykin. A cloudy recollection of somebody by that name flashed through my memory and I strove with

all my force to call Walter Boykin out of the shadows into the full light of recognition. But I failed utterly in identifying him or in locating even his name with any place or person. It hurt me to say so, but it was all that I could say truthfully. This time there was a sign of petulance in the gentleman which excited my self-reproach and yet, do what I would, Walter Boykin stubbornly refused to approve himself to me as one I had known in former days.

Finally and somewhat desperately he inquired if I remembered Chris Boykin. Then it struck me full in the face. Instantly there arose before me a vivid and an ever impressive picture. I was back again in the Tucker Swamp Baptist Church in Southhampton County, Virginia. It was a burning season in August and I, in the absence of the sick pastor, was engaged in a revival meeting,—a meeting of surpassing spiritual power. The morning sermon had been preached, the invitation to inquirers had been given and accepted by many, a rich old revival song was rolling in holy tumult through the church and the power of the Lord was upon the people. During this time I strolled down the aisle on the men's side of the church and under the bend of the little gallery I saw a boy sitting on a small backless bench crying with great emotion. The little fellow was possibly fourteen. His hair was red almost to the flaming point, his face freckled and in spite of his tears his blue eyes were full of light. Indeed his countenance marked him as a boy above the ordinary. His intense feeling, his open, unconscious and anxious crying drew me quickly to his side.

"What is the matter, my boy?" I inquired in kindly tone.

"I want to be a Christian," he said with conviction.

"Did you not hear my invitation?" I inquired. "Why did you not come?"

"Yes, sir, I heard you," he answered, "and I wanted to come, but I want my brother to go with me."

"It is noble in you to feel that way," I said to him, "and I hope your brother will join you in the Christian life, but you must not wait for him. In this matter each one must act for himself."

"I know that; but still I would like for brother Walter to go when I go," he said rather persistently.

"Where is your brother Walter?" I inquired. The little fellow turned to a much larger boy on his other side and for the first time I discovered that he had his right hand projected underneath his left arm and was grasping the hand of this bigger boy. He turned with surpassing tenderness and looked at the large fellow and said, "Here he is. This is brother Walter and I want him to go with me. Come on, brother Walter, and let's both of us go."

The appeal was thrilling indeed; it overwhelmed me and I turned and told Walter that I did not see how he could resist the affectionate entreaty of his brother.

Walter was very serious and full of respect for Chris. "I ought to go, I know," he said slowly, "but it looks as if I cannot go. I know you want to be a Christian, Chris, and you are a better boy than I am. You can go on and don't wait for me."

Chris got up and took my hand and went up the aisle with me. Just as he was about to take his seat at the front bench he whirled rather suddenly and went back. I let him go, wondering what it meant. He returned to his brother and got up in his lap and put his arms around his neck. That's all I know. I could hear nothing that he said, but I knew there was a struggle and I stood off and prayed that the Lord would help Chris. Presently he sprang alertly out of his brother's lap and he looked like a new Chris, radiant and exultant. Walter rose to

his feet, Chris grasped his hand and up they came together. As truly as Andrew brought Simon to Jesus, I believe it might be said, that lad, with the crimson lock and the rich blue eyes, brought his brother Walter to Jesus; and in after times while I could not recognize him as I much regretted my inability to do, so I was glad to hear that Walter had become a wealthy, influential and valuable Christian citizen in Georgia.

This story being historical and not made to hand refuses to conclude exactly as I once tried to make it do. I was preaching once at the ordination of a young minister in the Northern Neck of Virginia and used this incident to illustrate that a very ordinary person might bring an extraordinary person to the Saviour, having in mind at the time that Andrew brought Simon his brother. I mentioned how I had met Walter Boykin and what an eminent man he was becoming and then added that I had no idea on earth what had become of Chris. Dr. Geo. Wm. Beale, a noble Baptist minister of Virginia, was present on the occasion and in quick response to my reference to Chris said from his seat, "Be careful what you say. I was the pastor of Chris at Buchanan for a number of years and he was one of the choicest young men I ever knew and is still busy in the service of his Lord."

No wonder. He who brings one to the Saviour will only whet his passion for soul saving.

It was also during this pastorate while exceedingly busy in my study one day I heard a gentle rap at my door and upon opening it I found one of my little Sunday-school girls. Her presence surprised me, for it was a week day and I wondered that she was not at school. I asked her how it was that she had found time to come to see me.

"Oh, doctor," she said, "I came to bring you good news. This morning while praying in my room I found

the Saviour, and mother was so happy about it that she told me that I might stay away from school and come down and tell you all about it." I recall even now the radiant light upon her face and the joyous sincerity with which she told her story. It was better than a book on theology to mark the glow of religious rapture upon her face. Her outspoken experiences bespoke the living Christ. We had a brief prayer of thanksgiving and she indicated that her visit was at an end. I bade her good-bye, saying that I would see her that night, for we were holding revival services at the time. She made no reply and I repeated that I would see her that night.

"Not to-night," she said, and her face took on a sudden shadow.

"Not coming?" I said with unintentional cruelty. "Do you not desire to come to the meeting?"

I saw the lines of suffering on her face and her lip quivered.

"Oh, yes, indeed, I would like above everything to be here to-night," she said, "but I cannot come. This morning after breakfast I asked mother if I might go across the street and ask a lady to come with us to church to-night. I told her that I had been converted, and told her about the meeting and asked her to come with us to-night. She told me that she would come but she was afraid to leave her baby with the nurse, and I said that if she would come to the meeting I would stay with the nurse and help take care of the baby."

The way she said it went to my heart. It told of her childish ardor, her genuine zeal and of the Christlike self-denial already in her heart. She did not know that she had done a brave and lofty deed, but I knew it, and I looked upon her with wonder and with love as she shook my hand and flitted on light feet out of my office.

That night the house was crowded and I delivered a

brief sermon, at the close of which I invited inquirers to come forward. The front pews were filled with inquirers and among them a lady in mourning and deeply veiled. Approaching her I expressed pleasure that she had come and a desire to help her.

She thanked me in a quiet and candid voice and told me not to concern myself about her, adding that she was the lady that little Alice Robertson had told me about.

"Let me tell you," she said, "that for the first time in all my life my heart is full of religious peace to-night. When Alice came over this morning and told me about her conversion, it greatly impressed me, and when she offered to stay and care for my baby I really felt that God had sent her, and before I came to-night I knew that my little friend had led me to salvation. After the meeting is over I will need to talk to you about my future, but you ought to go now and give the help to these others, which Alice brought to me to-day."

My duties were driving me at a furious rate and except a few words which I had with the lady that night I knew nothing more of her until some time after I was told that her husband was sick and had expressed a desire to see me. I went of course and found him in bed. I had not seen him before but heard that he was a wholesale liquor merchant and utterly regardless of religion. After greeting him I began to question him about his sickness but he cut me short. "Never mind about my sickness," he said brusquely and yet with feeling. "I have deeper troubles than any my sickness could bring. Since that little Robertson girl got into my house the other day things have gone all awry. My wife is quite another woman and I see plainly enough that if I am to live with her I must be another man; but how can I? Can there be hope for such a man? It does not look that way to me. I am sick with my trouble and I

thought maybe it was my business. I hobbled into my buggy yesterday and drove to the store and told my partner that I would never come into that house again; that the business I would leave to him and he could do what he pleased with it. As for my part I would never sell another drop of whiskey if my family had to starve for it. I little know what will come of my action, but I am done with whiskey forevermore. I am glad of my decision, but it does not give me peace and I thought you could help me."

Truly he was a fit subject for the Gospel and I need not tell you that in a little while he was another man and he has been ever since.

It wasn't long afterwards before he entered the membership of my church. We needed no witnesses to tell that he and his wife were converted. The proofs of it were written all over their lives and they were open letters read of all men wherever they went. For a time he was a man without a job and without an income, but business pursued him, threw its gates open to him and prospered him at every step. He and his wife are still living. Almost boundless prosperity has enriched his path. He has become a leader among men, a great Bible teacher, a liberal giver, a champion of every great enterprise and one of the truest and most devoted friends that God has ever given me. He has reared a large family and many of his children are busy and efficient in the service of the Lord. Simon Seward,—that is his name, and he and his wife walk humbly before the Lord and delight in His service and His law. Little Alice did it. In her own bright and loving fashion she let her light shine and they saw it afar and followed it and it led them into the kingdom,

X

TWENTY-SIX YEARS TO A DAY

IT was on the fourth Sunday in May, 1875, that I entered formally into pastoral relations with the Grace Street Baptist Church, and on the fourth Sunday in May, 1901, I formally closed my pastoral relations with that church. At the time of my entrance into that pastorate I was not quite forty-one years of age, and the period of my service with that church covered the maturest and most experienced part of my life. It was a pastorate of great burdens, extraordinary inspirations, fearful embarrassments, arduous undertakings and many changes. Some asked me why and how I stayed so long. So great was my respect for that church; so profound was my conviction that my work was there and so delightful was my relationship with the people that nothing else on earth attracted me. It is no vanity whatever at this late day for me to say that many gates opened before me; many churches asked for my pastoral services and many inviting and honorable situations sought to woo me, but my heart had found its love and was immovable.

I cannot say that I did my work as well as I could have done it. In that respect I was often ashamed during my incumbency, and am still ashamed that I did not give a more undivided love and a more all-comprehending service to that queenly church.

I have sometimes said that I was afraid of the church and truly I was,—not sordidly, not for fear of losing my place, but I could not endure the thought of wounding or

displeasing or alienating the church. For many years the church treated me as its sovereign, freely gave me my way, showed most delicate respect for my wishes and was quick to follow me in all my leadings, but never did I think of myself as the master. I accounted myself my people's servant for Christ's sake and I loved to please, not as with eye service, but with sincerity and joy.

The church lives in my heart to-day. Its honor is dear as life to me and for its prosperity I cease not to pray.

It is no part of my purpose to recite the story of my pastoral career with the Grace Street people. In November, 1908, the church celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary and invited me to deliver a reminiscent address on that occasion. That address I venture to place in this volume of my remembrances of a life extended beyond all of my expectations and hastening now to its end.

TWENTY-SIX YEARS AT GRACE STREET

In the observance of its seventy-fifth anniversary the Grace Street Church honors me by its request that I will take part in its jubilee exercises. The specific request is that I will present in an address my recollections of that period of its history during which I was its pastor. That pastorate commenced in May, 1875, and ended in May, 1901, covering as you will see a little more than one-third of the entire lifetime of the church up to the time of my resignation. I need hardly say that in preparing my recollections the work has been one of ruthless and painful elimination,—and mutilation as well, since the bare fragments which I present form only a few selections from the crowded storehouse of my memory.

I came to this church under peculiar circumstances. My predecessor had resigned some time before under factional

pressure, and his resignation had been accepted. There was, however, an ill-suppressed mutter of discontent as to the situation, and when the committee appointed to nominate a pastor brought in my name, my predecessor was nominated also by a member of the church, and when the vote came I was left ingloriously in the lurch ; but the pastor reëlect felt constrained to decline the call and my name was presented again and I received all the votes except one. The lonely voter was one of the regenerated oddities of the human race. It was said of him that he voted against every pastor that was elected during his lifetime and then with equal consistency voted against the resignation of every pastor when it was presented. He met me when I came and with a frankness all abristle with sharp points, related to me what he had done, and I told him that it would be good for me to have a man who did not want me, who would watch me and mark my faults and walk around and duly publish them, and that I would respect his position and expect him to do his duty. He was a wood dealer and, barring some absurd prejudices which were never bitter, he was honest to the bone and about as advanced a specimen of facial homeliness as it was ever my painful duty to know. I told him that I suspected him of swallowing all the knots and crooked sticks in his wood-pile and selling all the rest to his customers, and as his office stood on one of the streets which I often travelled I usually peeped in and dickered and wrangled with him, much to his own satisfaction. One day he saw me passing and came out and said, "I hear some of them men in the church are gettin' after you and it is like 'em to do it. It is neither here nor there about my likin' you, but if you should need a friend, come by the wood-yard and you can get anything that's here." From that day he would have died for me, and I hardly know what it was that I would not gladly have done for him. I am

glad to-night to remember that when the light of earth was fading from him and he was consciously planting his feet in the surges of the Jordan I held his hand and got about the last pressure it ever gave before he went.

I found upon my arrival here a great church,—noble and magnificent in some things. It came to me from the hands of great builders. There was James B. Taylor, the quiet, indefatigable and sagacious foundation builder. He was really the man who put the first organic, constructive and cementing imprint upon the church. He breathed his spirit of discretion, honesty, justice and simplicity in the church. There was also Kingsford, the sarcastic and charming Kingsford. He put an almost classic touch upon the church, gave it a revelation of the great things of the world, gave them new views of the Scriptures, cut their faults and sins into tatters and lit the King's highway with truth and righteousness.

Then came David Shaver, a man whose speech was muffled by throat trouble, a philosopher who loved his cave and not the highway; but who was a great thinker and who taught the people to think. Then came Jeter, the tall, incorruptible, gifted and self-trained and masterful Jeter. He was here for seventeen years, in peace and war. He was a princely preacher in the matter of opening the Scriptures, making the truth luminous and winsome and indoctrinating his people. I sat under his ministry while a college student and he was my only theological teacher,—at least he and Andrew Fuller.

And then there was my predecessor and my cherished friend, Rev. Dr. N. W. Wilson. He was born an orator. He learned by instinct rather than by application. He was a sweet singer and an entrancing preacher. He filled the house with an admiring audience, and though not a scholar he was the master and teacher of scholars in his pastorate here. These are not all the men who worked

as overseers in this spiritual plant before I came this way. There were others who had brief and useful pastorates here but I am constrained to omit their names. You can well understand that a church transmitted to my pastoral care through such masterful hands was strong, well established in doctrine and capable of high achievements. I found a large but a somewhat fickle congregation, found a membership of nearly six hundred, but the pruning knife soon applied took off about one-fourth. I found the church amply organized but not without heterogeneous and conflicting elements. I found the Sunday-school overflowing but suffering for class rooms, better teachers and larger concert in action. My first days brought strain and anxiety. The recent disturbances entailed fearful aftermaths and for several months my power was small and my hindrances many and serious. Death came into my family in a little while and my own health required me to suspend service for most of the summer, and about all that I accomplished was to take a somewhat alarming inventory of my stock in trade and of the stringent demands that were to come upon me and to be met.

First of all the church building humiliated me. It was worthy of the times which brought it forth and it had undergone recent enlargement, but its architectural crimes, its lack of taste, its inadequacy, its contempt for ventilation, its cuspidors, the treasure and comfort of the tobacco lover and, above all, its pew system, gave me sickness of heart. It was distinctly a people's church and in a little while it was inadequate in its capacity to seat the crowd. In no great while we were smothered and hindered grievously in worship for lack of room.

But my brethren did not see it and I saw that I could not make them see it and so I had to wait. Finally they decided to my unfeigned chagrin to repair and enlarge,

and the result was a bungling job,—another concatenation of architectural outrages. The changes brought some relief and the turning of one of our missions into a church relieved the pressure in another way. But even then the house could not entertain the Sunday-school nor do justice to the congregation. Even at the Lord's Supper on some occasions the communicants could not be crowded into the auditorium and actually overflowed into the gallery. That was a time when my heart often failed and yet I knew that I had to wait. Of course there was a noble multitude who shared in these anxieties and who yet felt that the Lord's time had not yet come. It did come and of that I will tell you later.

I was depressed also by what seemed to me to be the barbed wire fences which were built around the church. It was openly said by one of the best of the members that we ought to make it hard for people to get into the church and easy to get out,—a statement smacking of wisdom and yet dangerous and almost ruinous in its application, and, in my judgment, false in its nature.

What to do with applicants for church membership is a question with several sides to it. In some churches the candidate for membership is lugged in bodily before the church and exposed to any questions that anybody may ask ; in some the matter is left to the pastor, and if he is efficient and level in his character his testimony in the case after such questioning as he may feel necessary in the presence of the church, practically decides what ought to be done with the candidate. In other cases there is an official meeting and the applicant is informed that he must confront that body which usually consists of the pastor and other officers of the church and occasionally a few women brought in in cases of exigency. Where there is harmony, discretion, intelligence and choice Christian manners well mixed in such a counsel it may do tolerably

well ; though I found that a good many were afraid to face such a formidable array of inquisitors and we lost some good people. Practically it had no effect as to what the result would be, as in well-nigh every case the pastor's word settled the matter after all. In my case I found an embarrassing complexity in the situation. There were some of the officers disgruntled, captious, rude of manner, and the tortures to which they subjected many applicants took all the starch out of me. I dreaded the council-chamber and went to it like one crossing the bridge of sighs. Churches must do as they please about this matter, but my experiences favor the warmest treatment of the convert. When he comes, let everybody talk to him and grasp his hands and bathe him in the light and love of Christian sympathies ; make it easy for him to come and when he comes before the church let the pastor emphasize the event, tell how gracious and God-born the church is, ask questions if that is the fitting thing, or let the applicant tell his own story if he can and follow his reception with all the demonstrations of welcome and confidence that love can suggest.

I was appalled to find also that no collection could be taken in the church except by vote of the church in its monthly business meeting. The cordiality with which I abhorred that trick of Satan I deem to this day highly creditable to my character, though I was not conspicuously courageous in openly waging battle against it. But I can truly say that never Jesuit, nor juggler ever schemed more tricks for avoiding that rule than I did. We suspended it, forgot it, postponed it, tried to amend it, made appeals for money, told them that it was unlawful for them to hand it in, but there was a table in front of the pulpit and that it would hold money if it were laid upon it, or that the ushers had good hearts and large hands and could be trusted. I brought missionaries there unex-

pectedly and they told their story, made their appeals and I with the neatest style of ministerial hypocrisy, told of the infallible and unavoidable rule and then juggled with the crowd and the missionaries went away regretting that there could be no collection, but with their pockets bulging with money. One night when it rained and the strict constructionists were nursing their rheumatism at home we punctured that rule and it went up in thin air, an offering, I hope, unto the Lord.

Then we had the quorum barbarism. We couldn't budge a peg unless we had twenty men present and then they put it up to thirty and some time after that they ran it up to forty-five, and as our church meetings were the most irreligious and disagreeable things that we had and as it was the hardest thing in the world to get forty-five men to come on the same night, a majority of our church meetings lapsed and those of us who were there held a prayer-meeting, grew in grace and adjourned. One night we had a quorum and a brother moved that we reduce it to thirty and several seconded the motion. Another moved to make it twenty and the seconders grew more numerous; a third man moved fifteen and there was a riot of seconds, and I said, "Don't let's have a quorum, and if the members don't come the pastor and the sexton will look after the best interests of the church." They jumped at my suggestion and had about as fine a jollification as any lot of college fellows ever did, and from that time we had church meetings, made up of lovers of the church, big, lusty, busy and truly evangelistic church meetings. I felt that the millennium was dawning.

Then there was the pew system. We had far more folks than seats, and yet a few crusty, jagged, scowling pew-holders, who usually came late and often slept well after they arrived, would now and then find their pews occupied by innocent strangers, and they would drench them

with vinegar and other acids of the figurative sort. And then there would be hurtful murmuring. The bulk of the members had no pews, and they had to give in one way and the pewholders, a privileged class, gave in another way, and neither class, or the two together, gave enough to run the church. About this matter I talked much with the Lord and much with the brethren, and at a meeting full of spiritual juice and brotherly love, I got an humble brother to move that the pew system be knocked over on the other side of eternity, or words to that effect, and I fairly fainted for joy. There was not one opposing vote, and I knew then that the kingdom of God was coming on faster and faster.

I ought to say, in closing this part of my subject, that I found in the church a faction,—a faction, small, solid and fractious to the point of politics and war. It was a thing of long standing, and old Dr. Jeter told me that it struck him rude, unmannered blows, and it embittered the last days of my predecessor and really led the movement for his ejection. It was on the fence when I got there, and lit off on my side and sampled me, amply coddling and feasting and flattering me during the time. I put in all my arts in the way of conciliation, and had enough stupid vanity to think that I was born for such a time as that, but before I got through with it I almost wished that I had not been born at all. . . . They had certain cherished crotchets which they desired my aid in transmuting into church laws, and there were also certain influential members in the church who, in their judgment, were altogether too active in governmental matters. More than all I was gradually developing individual characteristics, lines of policies, and committing business blunders that they felt it was of the utmost importance that they should supervise, correct or quietly exterminate. The outcome of it all was that I could not spend the same night

in two camps though I was quite willing to go back and forth several times before bedtime. This did not satisfy, and soon the blast of their hostile trumpet gave forth its shriek. The war was on and for nearly ten years my feet trod the thorny path. The faction never rose to the dignity of a party, never had much gathering force and was always afraid of a trial of strength on a public occasion.

It was, however, rampant, incessant and aggressive in its talk, deadly in its inquisitorial watchfulness over my official and private behavior, quick to take up, exaggerate and overcolor my faults, always ready to chill or block movements which I suggested or approved, and exceedingly careful and shepherdlike in their attention to any of my flock that suffered any real or fancied neglect on my part. It would hardly be too much to say that there were silent movements to block the financial machinery of the church and thus make me "non grata" on the score of not making the church pay expenses, and even the revivals were derided, the converts criticized and ever so many streams of cold water turned on in a way that put things at disadvantage. If some church chanced to call me, the fact was eagerly seized, and the report was sent forth swift-footed that I was planning to leave, and that victory would perch over their banners and that peace would come home to live.

But somehow I did not feel disposed to go ; a thousand times I asked the Lord to let me stay, sometimes asking that if He could lighten up the pressure a little that I would be greatly obliged, but be the pressure what it might, I still pled often and fervently that I might not have to go. Possibly my self-respect revolted at the thought of being ignominiously dislodged and of going out under compulsion, but in the sober review of this critical period of my pastorate, I think I can truly tell you to-day that there was very little that was personal in my

strong desire not to be driven out by factional antagonisms. I felt that it would be the triumph of a faction that ought not to rule; I felt that I would count it a great favor if the Lord would let me stay and see the end of it.

I ought to be candid enough to say that I was just as anxious for the factionists not to go as I was to remain on deck myself. It was never in my schedule to bring about their ejection nor their departure. I wanted the faction dissolved and its members sobered and sweetened and for peace and fellowship to be fully restored.

Finally the situation grew unbearably acute, and things were done that I would not dare to tell. They were too bad to tell, and showed what good men would do when untracked and reckless. Events were so serious and fierce that they brought me to a pause. I took my burden again to the throne and asked for instructions. For the first time I felt willing to go if the Lord indicated clearly enough that it was His will for me to go, though to save my life I could not feel that it would be the best for me to be eliminated under the dictation of that faction. Days of humble inquiry went slowly by and there came to me a most attractive and interesting call. I had asked the Lord if He would have me go to open the gate, and now the gate was open with a most attractive offer in sight. It brought me to the verge of surrender, but I took two weeks to think, to weigh, to cry and to decide, and one morning, when the situation was never more complex or menacing, I decided that I must stay. Of all this not a member of the church knew one single item, and it looked as if I had offered myself almost wantonly as a victim to the machinations and asperities of this opposition. That night in the prayer-meeting those who for so many years had blocked my way and embittered my existence one after another quietly laid down their arms and declared their loyalty to me as their pastor and their

readiness to work with me in the future. There it was,—the end; it had come in a moment, unannounced, and was greeted on my part with no noisy demonstrations, no thought of victory in my soul, but boundless gratitude to God and with a confidence renewed in simplest terms with those who had fought me. The war was over and I was there.

(It so chanced when this address was made in the Grace Street Baptist Church, a score of years after the foregoing events had closed, that the chief of all this great offending was sitting on the platform not far from the speaker, and it was quite clear that the bulk of the older people were keenly cognizant of the actual situation. The speaker closed his reference to this memorable experience in his pastorate by saying, “Those were pregnant and stressful days in my existence. The plowshare was in my soul for a decade and life hung trembling on the verge of tragedy. There were men who gave me trouble and there sits near me now the chieftain of that wasting strife. I could not give my recollections without saying here before him and before this great multitude that he was to me a trial long drawn out, and yet as I weigh the past, I do not believe I ever lost my respect for him, though I may have mislaid it more than once, and I am sure that I did not lose absolutely my faith in his Christian character, though it shook many a time and times upon times, I told the Lord that if He did not prop it up it would inevitably break into a hopeless ruin. After the end came I told him privately that I had gone through my heart, searching every corner and crevice, and that I found nothing there that would interfere with our fullest fellowship and our freest coöperation in all good works, and I can say to him to-day after the years have lapsed away, that I cherish for him genuine brotherly love and account him among that circle of

friends whom I can trust without a misgiving. I hold up my right hand before him declaring that in its grasp there is friendship and brotherhood untainted by one unhappy memory ;" whereupon this gentleman sprang to his feet, walked forward and exchanged with the speaker a cordial hand-grasp. It was an episode that will constitute a part of the permanent history of that church.)

What kept things going and that too at a clipping rate was the operative godliness of the people. The preëminent characteristic of the church was its converting power. Every year at least there were great ingatherings. The membership multiplied apace. Scores of visitors and strangers came to the church and under its grateful spiritual atmosphere they accepted Christ and we had a peculiar constituency of that sort, members of which I found in many places. The church sent out two full-fledged churches during my pastorate, and they went out without a jar and with the cordial affection of the mother. They went enriched with gifts as brides go from their father's house blessed with approval and crowned with gifts. Several other churches were organized in our part of the city which received their largest contingents from us. Young men and young women, boys and girls poured in year after year and then the young men went towards every point of the compass to try their fortunes under new skies and our magnificent young women, full of church ardor, trained in many phases of Christian service and untainted by worldly frivolities, won husbands from afar and went away to build up the kingdom of God in other places.

During my ministry I had noble ministerial brethren, men like Frank M. Ellis, A. E. Owen, H. M. Wharton and George C. Needham to help in our harvest work. But there was really no great need for helpers. The

church was a great spiritual breeder ; its spiritual fecundity was a wonder and it was only necessary to watch the signs, mark the season, call them together and sound the gospel trumpet and the work began. Most of the time we had no choir ; a little organ stood in the corner and my own half-grown boy gave the accompaniment and my soul's delight, Haddon Watkins, struck the tunes and the crowd, each with a hymn slip in his hand, joined in the song and sent wonderful praises up to God. Ofttimes and for years all helps would fail us and then I struck the tune and the congregation was so sympathetic that, if cheered on, their choral songs rang almost with the thunder notes of Niagara, and if the hint was given the song would be hushed to such softness and such wondrous sweetness that it was like a far-off strain of the choirs of heaven. That soft singing was a part of the equipment and power of the church. It ought to be added that Haddon Watkins, the matchless master of the spiritual solo, was a great converting force and not at Grace Street only but far and wide, in town and country, I often called him to help me charm the people out of the world and into the kingdom of God.

The constituency of the church was unusually interesting. It had its three classes in about equal proportion. There was first of all its high people. They were the scholarly people, the professional people and the aspiring people. Many of these were of noble social character but they never figured among the stilted, fashionable, indulgent and pretentious people who considered themselves the exclusive "it." The fact is that our high people were high chiefly in their intelligence, their lofty virtue and their decided spiritual activity and serviceableness.

Then down at the bottom, as some would say, were our poor. They who lived on the back streets and they in the little houses ; whose wives did the cooking and right

often the washing and whose husbands were day-laborers in the foundries, the factories, the shops,—men and women both whose Saturday night money fed them the next week. There were many of these and yet very few were poor enough to need the bounty of the church. I do not know that the church spent more than a thousand dollars in a year on its needy members and yet the church had quite a fame for taking ample care of its poor. The bulk of these whom we called the poor had an element of thrift; they saved something week by week, they got into the savings' banks, bought their little lots, presently building their little houses, and before you knew it they had something for a rainy day. They were great on the Sunday-school, faithful at the Sunday meetings and it was enough to make any pastor proud to have their love and also to see their passionate devotion to their church. When I got lonesome and couldn't make my sermons I plunged out among these people and always came back laden with spiritual spoils and preached much better the next Sunday under the warmth of my experiences during the week.

But the great bulk of the people belonged to class number three. They were the merchants, real estate men, contractors, clerks, travellers, lumber dealers, grocers,—none of them capitalists exactly, but they worked hard during the week, made money in a clean way, stood by the church in sunshine and storm and gave their money in a way that kept me continually proud of them. After the reign of the faction, or rather the worry of it, I accounted the church about ideal. Prof. H. H. Harris, one of the greatest men we ever had, said that it was so lovely to be a member of Grace Street that he was afraid that the contrast would not be distinct enough when he got to heaven. Rich and poor met together; high and low walked to and from the house of God in happy fel-

lowship; old and young vied with each other in helping on the good work. When I was installed as pastor, the former pastor said that I would not find the membership made up of angels, and for ten years I thought his remark, in part at least, was painfully true, but after all he was mistaken. Of course the love I had for my people overflowed all measures and defied all limits. As for the men,—oh, how courtly, genial, trustful and frank they were with me. They quarrelled with me considerably about going away and then freely forgave me when I got back. They voted me all the vacation that I would take and hung around me like brothers,—they were all brothers, twin brothers, brothers forever of mine.

Now Gabriel and some of the other notable angels I dare say know how to do fine things better than my men did, but my men suited me. They voted me the freedom of the church, differed with me whenever they chose and never failed to do what I asked. But as for the women, I confess they were very tyrannical. They ordered me to do whatever they wanted,—anything from an annual sermon, an unlawful notice, or twenty visits a day where they thought I ought to go in obedience to an imperious command, to a tailor's shop to get my proportions taken for something handsome at their expense. If my men grew torpid and slow the women were my refuge. If things needed changing about the church I gave my modest nod to the ladies,—angels of love, of mercy and of speedy service they were. They only had to start a thing and get to talking and the men, heavy footed before, brisked up and fell in and in the name of the Lord we could do anything on earth we wished.

But let me get away from this. My enchanted memory would gladly linger here forever.

Possibly here, as well as anywhere, I might pause to call a few names that ought at least to be mentioned on

an occasion like this,—men and women who sat under my ministry, so sadly unworthy of them. Dr. J. B. Taylor was gone, but his venerable wife and his daughters were here and their memory is one of the crowns of this church that will hardly ever fade. Dr. J. B. Jeter, when I came, was here in his later prime,—tall, well rounded, with hair like snow, with a swing and bound worthy of a boy. He was then at the full tide of his editorial glory, the central figure of Virginia Baptists, with a soul so cheery that discouragements cheered him. He had a lovely and a somewhat awful frankness. “You preached a noble sermon yesterday,” he said to me one Monday morning, and of course I was human. And then he added, “But the sermon you preached yesterday week in my humble judgment was one of the most hopelessly mean sermons that I ever heard anybody preach.” I loved him in one part of my soul that day and kept the other locked up. There was Dr. Alfred E. Dickinson, a man immensely strong in some things and not strong at all in others, but withal one of the most entertaining and brilliant paragraphists that ever enriched a newspaper. There was A. B. Brown;—oh, my incomparable brother! Frail was his body, ill-shapen his face, weak and faltering his gait, but an intellectual colossus; a philosopher and a man whose modesty and courtesy and patience under trial marked him for the gallery of God’s masterpieces. I name Herbert H. Harris again, the unrivalled Bible class teacher, the ever wise counsellor of this church. He died away from Richmond but his silent form came back to his church and boundless honors crowned him as he went away to his reward.

The list of ministers who worshipped with us is too long to be called and I must pass it by to call up ministers born in this church, or sent out by it.

Take Derieux whose life is an evangel and whose min-

istry is enriched by his own grace and unction ; or Carter Jones, the inimitable pulpit orator of our Southern ministry, and E. Pendleton Jones, attractive as a minister and almost peerless as a pastor ; or take James Taylor Dickinson, who stands among the foremost in our denomination at the North, or George Braxton Taylor, as modest as he is scholarly, as efficient as he is unassuming, pure and gentle as a woman, vigorous and powerful with tongue and pen,—a leader and an example among us ; or Wirt Trainham, approved of God, successful wherever he has been ; or E. B. Hatcher, who would hardly speak to his father if his father undertook to speak for him at such a time as this ; or Arthur Cox, devout and full of holy energy, and though his lot is cast afar, his loyal heart often brings him home ; or Aubrey Williams, whose star is ever in the ascendancy and whose good works are his sufficient testimonial ; or J. P. Essex, whose fruitful ministry gives ample ground for all the pride we feel in him ; or our own loved or somewhat lost Gardner, whose only fault was that he was too strong for us to be able to hold him, and of course and by all means our own beloved pastor D. M. Ramsey, one of the best of all and largely because the church made him what he is and brought him here for what he is able so well to do. But I must not omit the youngest in the household, the boy of my delight, Thos. V. McCaul, who started without a dollar, took Richmond College honors, went to Louisville and graduated there and came back to get all that our state university could confer upon him.

May our ministerial tribe never grow less but rather multiply and refresh the earth and lead the way to heaven.

I tremble to mention the men with whom I have taken sweet counsel in the past, and if I do mention a few and pass over the many, think not that I have forgotten them ;

remember the hour is far spent and I must not make shipwreck of your patience. I must call the name of the senior deacon, who welcomed me here,—Wellington Goddin, an amiable, home-loving, open-handed brother. He gave his money, his life, his family to this church. There used to sit with him in our official council-chamber when I first came, Henderson, Jacobs, Evans, Glazebrook and Minor. Minor was the man of prayer and of the gentle mien, and all believed in him. There came a troop of them later, Ellett, chairman for quite a while, Crump, the shrinking, the refined and the faithful; Pilcher, brought up in the church, long the leader in the music and faithful teacher in the Sunday-school, Otway Brown, with many infirmities of body but of a lordly and faithful soul and served as deacon, clerk and superintendent, and Dr. H. W. Davis, my boy friend at college, converted under my eyes and as true a man as ever entered the doors of this church; and Wm. R. Jones, who remembered for me the things that I was likely to forget, who had a godly stubbornness and with whom I found more pleasure in wrangling than I did with some who always agreed with me, and Geo. R. Pace, whom I loved when I was at college, who gave me his full heart and who never fell short in any duty through his own neglect; and many more I love though unmentioned here.

But the friend of friends whose home was mine, whose children were as my own, whose love was immeasurable, whose steadfastness and help largely held me up, Eldridge Marcellus Foster, to-night looks down from the hills of glory and my soul salutes him.

Think not that to-night I can fail to mention that lovely and ever interesting feature of my Grace Street pastorate,—My Boys' Meeting. It was born December, 1876, and departed this life in May, 1901. It was a boys'

affair but it was twenty-five years and a half old when it passed away. It was the perpetual fountain of youth, and at that fountain I drank freshness and bliss every Sunday afternoon. They raised over \$10,000 during their lifetime, and on one occasion at least, when the church was in a financial strait, they graciously loaned to her four hundred dollars to help her along with her current expenses. My boys often delighted great throngs with their entertainments ; they always enriched the exercises of our Sunday-school anniversaries, and groups of them went far and wide with their speeches, their dialogues and their music, ever ready to lend a helping hand. For years they thronged the front pews of the church and were my best listeners and among my sweetest singers, and as for order they were next to perfection. Out of that meeting went hundreds of men true, not ashamed of their religion, well thought of far and wide, and it used almost to fill me with unseemly pride to know that a boy that belonged to "Dr. Hatcher's" boys rarely found it hard to get a place. In these later days I travel much and go afar and whether it be on boat or train or in the hotel or in some church, be it in the North or the South or in the West I never get out of sight of my constituents, my noble, loyal and faithful boys. Here to-night I stood upon this platform and saw them crowd in, scores and hundreds, and while now they are men, brave, godly men and only a fair sample of multitudes of others like them, they are still my boys and I almost believe they will still be so in that world where we can have a far greater reunion than that it moves me so to see to-night. If I could call the roll they would answer from almost every part of the earth, and some already glorified would answer from out the windows of heaven through which they look out upon us to-night.

I must also be permitted to add that I had another

band of boys, and that the students of Richmond College. For much of my pastorate the bulk of them attended our church. They came in troupes to the Sunday-school and used to throng into my congregations. A great number of them I baptized with my own hands, and perhaps even more of them were converted here who joined the churches elsewhere. There too were a multitude of ministerial students, the majority of whom constitute now the bone and sinew of our Virginia ministry, and others of them, a blessed contingent, are scattered all over our republic and some of them beyond the seas. They were an inspiring element in our congregation, and so far as I know their love for this old church knows no abatement and without an exception so far as I recall, I have in each one of them a younger brother, faithful and full of comfort to me. It would not be fair if I did not add even yet that troops of boys from the medical colleges often came in with us, and in my travels I am constantly meeting these students, now efficient, and in many cases eminent physicians, doing their work and serving their generation. With the grasp of their hand always come fine words about this old church and the good they got here.

But I promised a word in regard to our church building. From the day I got here I purposed in my heart to build a house unto the Lord, just as David did, and I greatly thanked my heavenly Father that though He would not allow David to build one house for Him, He gave me the exultant privilege of building two for Him. It was a lonesome time I had, waiting for the day when I might see my purpose fulfilled. After all I had to practice a little duplicity which I verily believe was of a good moral sort. I started out under the pretext of enlarging and improving the old house, which I intended to do if nothing better could be done. It was John Gresham who

fretted me into the start. He had a great Sunday dinner prepared for me and I didn't want to go and I refused so long as I could, but finally assured him that I was going only because he wanted me, and also that I was going not in the best humor. He said that his wife had had the dinner prepared and he had promised to deliver me in person at his house, and as to the state of mind in which I went, that wouldn't count at all. So I went and E. W. Gates and B. B. Van Buren went, as John said, to fill up, which same they faithfully did. After dinner I brought up the church business and had a wrangle lasting until supper, but I went back into town with forty-five hundred dollars promised. Gold in the hand would not have been one whit better. It was one of my happy customs to have a New Year's reception every year and everybody from the loftiest deacon to the smallest member of the infant class was expected to come into my house, have a handshake, take a taste of food and a New Year's card and go away resolving to be better, and it looked to me as if all of them kept their promise.

That Sunday night I told them that the following Wednesday night would not only witness my reception but would also celebrate my silver wedding, and that I wanted them to bring me a present on New Year's evening. They looked decidedly surprised, for I had not made it a point to regale them with my mendicant appeals, and after a little I told them it was for repairing the church for which I asked the money, and I expected them to bring me \$10,000. They laughed an incredulous but good-natured laugh and I told them I fully expected to get it. When we counted it up it was a fraction over \$12,000 and by that time the ship had crossed the bars and was fully out to sea. We got so much that I went the circle again to see how much they would add to the amount promised to have a new house. In three more

days we had \$30,000 and with that, after giving letters to a few to whom progress was pain and disappointment, we voted unanimously to have a new house. It cost nearly \$70,000. We subscribed our money when times were good and had to pay it when times were hard and what was more, had to take three pulls and four years before we entered what was the largest, most convenient, most imposing building in the city. The glories of dedication day cannot be spoken by my dull, unworthy lips. Friends came from far and wide to rejoice with us. Dr. John A. Broadus, peerless among American ministers, preached the sermon and my people were happy, noble, and united in the triumphs and glories of the day.

The auditorium had ample sittings for 1,550 people and thirty rooms all admirably furnished. My study in some way touched the tender spot in my people and they crowded it with all the choicest and most useful things. It was truly a dream of a study.

We entered this edifice on the fifth Sunday in March, 1894, and on the 26th of February, 1896, the building was turned into ashes with everything it contained. Its furnishings had cost nearly \$10,000 ; its glass was costly and beautiful. My study had all my books, my manuscripts, my most treasured correspondence and about everything that a man gathers in a twenty years' pastorate in the way of souvenirs, love tokens and heart treasures. Every particle of it went up and out on the wings of the flames. It was my bitter task to discover the fire and to seek the help of the fire department. A wind, almost cyclonic in its violence, was shaking the city and odd and unexplained delays in the coming of the fire fighters set the flames beyond the reach of suppression. In five minutes after the chief of the fire department arrived he approached me and said, "I am exceedingly sorry, doctor, to say that we cannot save your building, but must

give all of our time to preventing a general conflagration."

"If it must be so," said I, "do your duty to the city." But I added as I turned to the crowd that if the church had to go I must at least be spared the sight of its destruction. I turned away and some one threw his arms over my shoulders from behind and said in cheery tones, "Never mind, doctor, let her go and we will build you another, and the glory of the second shall outshine that of the first."

I turned and it was one of the best friends the church had,—the ever-popular Charles H. Eppes, city sergeant, a royal fellow and though not a member of the church, one of its most generous supporters.

The fire was discovered at two o'clock P. M., and at three the funeral of Deacon A. L. Shepherd was to take place in the building. One of the quietest of all our deacons came to me and said to me, "What can I do for you?"

I said, "See Dr. Landrum and tell him to open the Second Baptist Church for the funeral. Have notices of the funeral put up where all the people can see it who come to the fire, and notify the family to head the procession to the Second Church." With a delay of just fifteen minutes the friends had about filled the Second Baptist Church, though they left the burning church to go, and the funeral service was as quiet and solemn as if it was being held in the building which the good deacon had helped to build and to which he had given a magnificent solid communion set which, alas, was melted by the same flames which consumed the house.

I dropped in at Deacon Foster's to wait until time for the funeral and told the dread news, and mother and daughters actually wailed in piteous distress. The spectacle reversed the current in my case and I sprang to my

feet and declared that never a sigh nor a tear should tell any grief of mine, and truly from that moment I never felt one pulsation of sorrow. I did more than that. I assumed a most arbitrary and exacting air and told those ladies that I had to go to the funeral and that I wanted a lunch, a good one and at once, and in five minutes the good things were multiplying on the table, and those heroic women were chatting almost gleefully about what a time we would have in building another church. In spite of it all, I felt a rawness of heart and wondered how many prophetic shriekers would beat around to talk of what a significant dispensation of Providence it was. I was well scourged for my thoughts, for on my way to the funeral I met one of my boys and he remarked that the burning of the church was very unfortunate. "But," said he, "doctor, call on me for \$100," and I turned the corner and there was my most distinguished and eminent friend, Dr. M. D. Hoge, the very flower and pride of Southern Presbyterianism, and he gave my hand a most reviving shake and said, "My good brother, you must not deny me the coveted privilege of giving you a mite to get you up at once another church; draw on me for \$100 at any hour you need it."

I ought to say that we were in the midst of a great revival at the time, aided by Dr. L. G. Broughton, whose sermons were in my study and met the same fate as my lumbering pile of homiletic matter. I told him that I knew that when the flames struck his sermons that they could never be stopped and he rather meanly intimated that if the fire got into mine it would be the first time they knew what fire was,—or words to that effect.

The next morning papers contained my request that my people would meet in the First Presbyterian Church at two o'clock that afternoon. It looked as if every one of them came and with them hundreds of the children

and yet other hundreds of friends and neighbors. The general voice was that there never was such a meeting as that. I entered the room with several friends from the rear, and as we advanced to the pulpit we struck an old-time hymn. Everybody cried but us and I dare say we cried some too during the first stanza. With the next stanza some lifted up their heads and began to sing, and by the time we got to the end of the hymn the house was reverberating with exultant praises. Outsiders came and looked as if they were almost disposed to break up the meeting by insistent offers of money to help us build. Ministers and the Jewish rabbi were there to offer us their churches, and I carried a paper appointing one committee to build us a tabernacle for temporary purposes; and a building committee to take into hand the matter of a new house of worship. The spirit of the assembly rose in fervency, reverence, exultation and joy. There was no programme and not much order; but it was the most sacred, uplifting and heavenly disorder that ever marked a religious assemblage. It looked as if we would not be able to stop the buoyant fellowship and bounding praises of the people. At last I thought we had the blessed mob under control, when a man sprang up and said, "For heaven's sake, do not break up until we have time to shake hands with our pastor. We want to let him know that we are all right and if there is anything on earth that he wants us to do, let him tell us and we are subject to orders."

The hand-shake came on in which some of the ministers shared and both of my hands were in sad need of a physician after the hysterical squeezes which about a thousand people had given them.

At the close of it all, the Jewish rabbi, a scholar, a gentleman and a man of heart, said to Dr. Kerr, the hospitable and distinguished pastor of the church, that he

had heard that there was no power in the name of Jesus and had often said so himself, but that he would never say so again, solemnly adding that never in his life had he seen such an impressive, religious demonstration as he had witnessed at that time.

And then came the rarest and most unworldly manifestation of human nobility that I ever saw. The stream of sympathy gathering from all quarters broke in overwhelming volume upon the church. A distinguished gentleman said that the outbreak of kindness constituted a new era in the history of Christian fellowship. The whole city poured out in practical shape its compassionate sorrow. All gates were opened, and all hands stretched out to help. Our church had more homes than it could even enter to hold a thanksgiving service. It worshipped in thirteen different places, and one unsophisticated boy touched off the situation with unconscious humor when he said, "I was converted in the Second Baptist Church, received for baptism at the First Presbyterian Church, baptized at the Calvary Baptist Church and received the right hand of fellowship in the Jewish Synagogue."

What a chapter of grace, liberality, self-sacrifice could be written of the days that followed that fire. I never knew people were so good, and never learned how to love with unlimited ardors until that time. Truly did we "build another" of old Virginia granite after a new and admirable pattern, and sure enough the glory of the latter far outshone the glory of the former. That church was dedicated on the first day of the week, the first day of the month, the first day of the year and the first day of the twentieth century.

It was a day of days, a day of new days and a day whose glory will outlive the century which began with it.

But this racing, half-told and never to be told story of

my Grace Street pastorate must halt. Your patience has been wonderful, and I am sorry that I have not told it better. When I resigned, it was not because I wished to resign, and Deacon Foster, chairman of the committee sent to ask me to reconsider my resignation, assured me that he could find not a single one who wished me to resign. But it was done under a long and oft-continued pressure that I must do a service for my Alma Mater to whom I owed so much and from whom had come a claim so urgent and pathetic that I could not disregard it. No pastor ever had a more inviting or satisfying pastorate, and I think that no church ever had a more grateful or a more loving pastor. I was never satisfied with my work, but so far as it was unsatisfactory to my people, charity covered up that part of it, and so we parted in sorrow and in a love which can never die in this world nor in the other.

I know that far more of those who welcomed me here when I first came are in heaven than are here to greet me to-night, and I feel well assured that out on the eternal hills I shall see not only them but those who still abide upon the earth as they come up to join the celestial throng

Where congregations ne'er break up
And Sabbaths have no end.

XI

QUITTING THE SHEEPFOLD

WHEN I was about sixty-five years of age my life suffered a reluctant wrench. Richmond College was my alma mater ; she was exceedingly good to me in the rude days of my early manhood and opened the way by which I secured my not too generous collegiate training. I cherished the college with filial devotion, and counted it my pride to serve her with a zeal that asked no fee and halted at no sacrifice. Quite early in my ministry I became one of the trustees, and later on, I became the official head of the Board. The trustees laid hold upon me and demanded that I go out and secure an additional endowment. I shrank fearfully from the task and declined over and over again, but the importunity of friends and brethren so beloved and so insistent brought me to a reluctant surrender. It meant retirement from a church of which I had been pastor for a quarter of a century, which I loved more than my life, and which had learned to be inexhaustibly patient and gracious towards me.

It was not a good time to go after money ; it was too late in my life to set my boat upon untried seas. I got the money I was asked to get and did other incidental work besides, but it led to the rending of my pastoral ties and added nothing in compensation for that change. I never had regrets : it seemed a thing of fate that I had to do, and while uncongenial and irksome, I remember the work as having been done by a thankful son for an ever-cherished mother. It was something worth living for to

have five years of unbroken fellowship with two men to be forever enshrined in my heart. One was Rev. Dr. C. H. Ryland, financial master of the college for full forty years, one of my old college comrades, true as steel, pure as gold, and unrivalled in worth among all the sons of men whom I have known. The other was Frederick William Boatwright, whom I learned to love as a boy, whose brave career I have ever watched with pride, and whose reign as President of the Richmond College has been magnificent in its achievements and its splendor.

It is fitting that I should add that in considering the appeal to devote some of my time to the better equipment of Richmond College I was brought face to face with the question as to what the rest of my life should be concerned with. I foresaw that it would involve the breaking of my pastoral ties, and I felt distinctly that after giving up my incomparable and ever loyal Grace Street charge I could never grow into another pastorate. It was that fact that made me pause so long and to suffer so much under the clamor of the trustees for my services. If I could have taken a little while and then resumed my pastorate, that would have been quite another thing, but the change involved the recasting of my earthly future which I hardly then thought would be so extended as it has proved to be. I dare not have the presumption of saying that God was opening my way for me, and yet not even His goodness could have set out my path or my task in these latter days more to my taste and to my comfort than it has been in detail as well as in outline.

XII

WAYSIDE AND OUTSIDE

MY unconquerable passion for going bore me far abroad as a helper of my brethren in their evangelistic meetings. The churches which I served sought to moderate my enthusiasm in this fascinating specialty, and not a few brethren assigned me a place among the incorrigibles. My topmost delight was the country revival which showed the rural brethren at their best. It evoked their hospitality, furnished an open field for social commingling and, by separating the people from their avocations and their homes, put them in the best mood for hearing the Gospel and looking after the salvation of their neighbors. As time went on many city pastors sought for my services. As a rule my summer vacations were given out freely to revival meetings, from their beginning to the time of my return, and during the several seasons of the year I would slip away on the early Monday trains and give the week days to revival services. Quite often I would simply announce to my church on Sunday that I would be in a revival meeting at a given place for a given time, indicating the arrangements for substitutes in my absence. Now and then I would suggest to the city churches that were clamoring for my help that they appeal to the Supreme Court, my church in that case constituting the final resort, and almost without exception every well articulated appeal for my services was honored by my people. My deacons used to sit up with my case wondering whether I was beyond redemption, now and then sending one of their number to labor with

me. He generally ended his interview by apologizing for his intrusion, and stoutly maintaining that he believed that the indications of providence were on my side. I found that I could afford to strain the patience of my people to some extent by running off in revivals,—some declaring that they did not believe that I could help it, and others feeling that in antagonizing me they might find themselves fighting against God. Now as I look back and think of it all my heart melts as I remember the patience, courtesy and loyalty of those whose pastor it was my honor and glory to be. When I began my Richmond pastorate I told my church at the time of my installation that the cry of the churches for my help rang for me like the voice of God and that they might as well understand that they would have trouble with me on that score as long as they held on to me. When I preached my farewell sermon to them after a twenty-six years' pastorate I reminded them of what I said at the beginning, and told them that whatever they might think of my conduct in other respects, as their pastor, I thought that there was one promise I made that I had fulfilled, and that was the promise to go out and help the other churches. The remark brought on almost tumultuous laughter, for my wayfaring habits were well known to my church and they had long ago given up the hope of breaking my speed in that particular. After their laughter had ceased I told them that while some mistakes might have been made in that respect I fully believed that the church was greater by reason of my going than it would have become by my staying. Indeed my people came, during the later years of my pastorate, to welcome me after my prolonged absences by telling me that I always brought them bottles of the old wine of the kingdom when I came back from the Gospel feasts of the other churches.

Truly I had a holy fear of my church,—not the ignoble

dread of rude dismissal, but the fear of wounding them by an ill-proportioned interest in things apart from them. Sometimes I would hasten home on late Saturday nights. They always said that they did not look for me until the last train. My accusing fancy would conjure before me pictures of wounded hearts stricken by neglect and no longer trustful and tender towards me. But in some unexplained and blessed way my soul would get charged with a message,—heaven must have given it to me,—which was the very bread of life to the thronging crowds which never failed to meet me. Their welcoming smile, their eager hand-grasp, and even their chidings, made my pastorate a song whose enriching notes seemed full of the world unseen.

In contrast with these times of bliss with my people were hardships, downfalls and grim adventures which befell me in my efforts to serve others. I give a case here which occurred in the midst of the wildest mountains into which I ever penetrated and which went far and wide at my expense, and I often told it myself.

One of the peculiar passions of my life has been to save important occasions from going to wreck, as they are often in danger of doing, from the lack of management. It is, however, a species of interference that often reacts in a dangerous way. On several occasions I was taught by acute experiences that to intrude into situations not fully understood may land a man into other situations far more embarrassing. I was called into the mountains of Virginia to preach on the occasion of the dedication of a house of worship in a small secluded village. One feature of the services was an ill sorted and untutored choir which, while harrowing enough in its performances, was evidently very proud of itself, and thought that it was heading towards immortal fame. On the day following the

dedication a large missionary association held its meeting in the newly dedicated church. There were very distinguished speakers present; visitors had come from great distances; expectation was eager and the outlook for a great impression was most inspiring. The morning opened well and the choir reappeared in the little box gallery in the rear of the church, and was evidently there to win new laurels. Unfortunately several pieces of music were rendered with the utmost maltreatment, and yet the speakers were full of eloquence and power.

At the close of an address a modest brother was called out to read an important paper. Just about the time he was unlimbering and ready to fire off, something happened. Up in the choir gallery some man started out to sing a solo which was evidently not on the programme. It was quite clear that he was lying down and his voice quavered mournfully and dragged along heavily as he moaned out to the tune of old Martin, "Jesus lover of my soul."

A look of painful surprise marked the audience and the meandering soloist finished the line without interruption.

It was at this point that I entered the scene with the brave intent to turn confusion into a musical victory, and with religious energy the soloist and myself made a duet as we sang together, "Let me to Thy bosom fly."

I felt quite sure that under my bold leadership the crowd would fall in and that we would make the old hymn roll out with congregational vigor. I was mistaken. The grim and desolate soloist and myself were left alone in our gloom and glory. I confess that it provoked me, and so I stopped to review the situation. The melancholy man in the gallery headed into the third line,— "While the raging billows roll," and slurred and demi-semi-quavered through it alone. The audience remained

quiet, some, as if crushed with humiliation; some, as if they would explode with laughter, and I with far more zeal than discretion felt quite outraged that neither the choir nor the people seemed ready to take part. I determined that something must be done, and so when the soloist in the gallery turned into the fourth line I broke in with him, fully set on getting the people into the song.

With all the vocal energy which I possessed, and my capacity for making a noise was considerable, I pealed forth at the top of my voice, "While the tempest still is high," and counted fully on a general musical rally in the audience.

Not a note was heard except from the dismal brother in the gallery and myself in the pulpit at the other end of the house. I experienced all the coldness which attends a man in the moment of a great failure. Indeed a sense of being hopelessly stranded shot through me, and I wished sincerely that I had not come. Just then a tall, thin, reverential but excited man rushed down from the gallery and pulled up the aisle and approaching me said, with cutting reproach :

"Why, Dr. Hatcher, didn't you know that man in the gallery with that maudlin voice is drunk?"

"No, I didn't," I said quite stormily; "nor did I know that you employed drunkards to do your singing," which remark I fancied would wither my critic out of existence.

To my utter surprise the crowd broke into gales of laughter which I knew instinctively were entirely at my expense, and the echoes of that uproar of merriment have broken around me many times since. I honestly believe that from that time I have been a fraction more discreet, but I have not been able to out-travel the amusement and reminders of that story.

In sharp contrast with the humorous experience just related I add the following bewildering and yet affecting

story, how in the mysterious turns of life men of such different characters, such bitter memories and such warring hostilities may be brought together in sudden and glorious harmony. This incident occurred in one of the greatest churches in America, and only those who witnessed it can understand the jar, the strain, the humor and even the grace and beauty of it.

One night in a memorable meeting a gentleman came forward, evidently a Christian but not an acquaintance of mine, and told me that he was very anxious to introduce to me a friend of his in whom he was especially interested. He brought up a well-dressed and fairly attractive looking man, not yet old enough to be counted middle aged. I entered into conversation with the man and found him very serious, and he so attracted me that I told him he must not go away until I had brought him in contact with some of the members of the church, many of whom were standing around in different portions of the house. My eye chanced to light on one of the deacons, Deacon Duncan, and I called him forward.

“Deacon Duncan,” said I, “I want to introduce to you my friend, Mr. C——, and I desire that you will take him in charge and be to him a brother and a friend.”

I saw an unmistakable embarrassment on the part of the deacon and the man. It was acute, benumbing, and yet I determined to push it along. I told the deacon that he and my friend had better get into a quiet part of the room and have a good talk together, and they walked off in company. After a while the room had emptied itself, the conversation of the deacon and Mr. C—— had closed and Mr. C—— had gone out with his friend, and Deacon Duncan walked up on me with about as queer and crushing sort of a look on his face as I ever saw in all my days upon any mortal face. He was pale, sick and tremulous.

"Doctor, do you know what you have done to-night?" he inquired with great seriousness.

I replied that if I had done anything that ought not to have been done, it was his time to do the preaching and I would do the repenting. He then proceeded to tell me that the man that I had placed in his charge, had, about five years before that, burglarized his home and stolen every piece of silver there was in the house.

There it was now, sure enough. It was my time to be silent and yet it was a time when I was bound to speak. I asked him what occurred when they walked off and got face to face.

"The poor fellow," he said, "was cut to the heart and said to me that he hoped that I would not feel it my duty to strike him down. 'I see that you know me, Mr. Duncan,' he said, with great humility, 'and if you did not know me, I would not be unwilling for you to know me. You know the wrong that I did you; I fully justify your pursuing me; I am glad that you got all of your property back; my punishment I took, and when it was over I determined that my future should be spent in this city. There were several gentlemen who had not lost faith in me, bad as I was, and they took me up. They have set me up in business in another part of the city and I am getting along. I want to be a better man and came to this meeting that I might seek the mercy of God.'"

"What did you say to him?" I ventured to ask.

"'Do not be uneasy,' I said to him; 'we will bury the past right here; I have nothing against you now and I offer you my confidence, my sympathy in your struggle to be a better man.'"

He then added that the past was blotted out and he had a hope that the man's desire to begin life anew would ripen into a conviction, adding that he and others would

treat him as a brother and do what they could to help him to a better life.

It would indeed be wonderful, and it ought to be usual, if cases of this kind were occurring at all the churches. If the Gospel of Jesus had free course to run, it would win some of its chiefest glories in the salvation of such cases as this.

Another one of my revival experiences occurred in the winter of 1898 when it was my good fortune to spend about a dozen days in assisting Dr. H. F. Colby, then pastor of the First Baptist Church at Dayton, Ohio, in evangelistic services. There grew up in the meeting the odd and yet helpful fashion among the Christian people of bringing their unsaved friends forward at the close of the service to introduce them to me. It brought about several most unexpected results.

One night a gentleman came up and told me that he was authorized by a certain lady to say to me that she would be present at the service on the following night to make an open confession of her faith in Jesus Christ. It was something out of the ordinary and drew us to further conversation, during which he was led to tell me that she could not come that night, that she had a great social function, a euchre party, as he called it, at her home. He also gave me to understand that she belonged to the fashionable set of Dayton and was not in any way connected with the congregation to which I was preaching. I confess frankly that it brought a decided coolness over me to learn that she was kept away from the meeting by such a peculiar form of social dissipation as the man had frankly spoken of. I made no reply but I practically turned the whole thing out of my mind and would probably never have recalled it again.

The next night came and I, utterly forgetful of the

woman who was coming to make public avowal of her faith, made the usual appeal for public confessions of faith. Almost with the moment that the invitation passed my lips there arose in the rear of the church a young woman—I would not say brilliantly dressed but herself so rarely and brilliantly beautiful that she imparted beauty to her dress and to her entire person. A lawyer friend, a member of that church, declared afterwards that it was a transfiguration. He said that the lustrous beauty of her presence must have been touched with irresistible glory for, as he declared, the whole side of the church on which she came flashed with resplendent light. For my part, I only know that I saw in her one of the most beautiful women that I ever looked upon and when she came forward and grasped my hand, she said, “I am the lady that had the euchre party last night and I will be glad to speak with you after the service ends.”

She took a seat on the front pew and waited until many different friends, for one reason and another, had held me in conversation and until, indeed, I was free from all interruption. She rose and came forward and I suggested that we take a seat and she told me her story, which I believe I can reproduce without any important variation.

“I ought to tell you,” she said, “that I form a little part of the social life of Dayton. The custom in the city is, among the members of Dayton society, to give a series of entertainments or functions for the season, each young woman having her own night. Last night was my time, chosen weeks ago after good understanding with other friends who expected also to entertain. Of course, it is quite an undertaking to prepare for one of these occasions. My tickets were sent out a full month ago and went to friends in many parts of Ohio and not a few in other states. We had worked hard to have every detail all

right and day before yesterday it was decided that we had everything in readiness and would have a day and night of freedom. Night before last a friend was in to see me and told me of the meeting here and, as I was at liberty and as I was not without thoughtfulness about religious things, I accepted his invitation to come around. The services affected me profoundly—so deeply, indeed, that before I went out of the house I fully determined that I would devote my life to Jesus Christ, my Saviour, but I made no public acknowledgment of it. When I left the church I was confronted with the impending function which I was to give and which I suddenly felt was in some way out of harmony with my new religious experience. I can tell you frankly that if I could have seen any satisfactory escape from having the party, it would have brought me great relief, but my tickets had gone out long ago ; my guests were already coming into the city ; the supper, the music, the flowers were engaged and there was no power of recalling the engagement. I knew that to retreat at that point would never be understood and would bring criticism, which in my judgment would have hurt the cause far more than to have the party. So I determined to let it go on ; it passed off with all the fitness, grace and effect that previous care could make possible. I devoted myself to the comfort of the guests, I gave them all that I had invited them to and gave it with all the cordiality of which I was capable. There was no hitch nor break nor blunder and the friends seemed to have an evening full of pleasure and happiness. I desire to say to you that I did not deny my new Master, although we had the party. When it came to the end and the friends were gathering with a view to separation in a little while, I got their ear and thanked them for their coming, expressed the joy in having them and my high appreciation of their good-will and

friendship, but I added that the night before an event had happened in my life that was destined to exercise a controlling influence over me in the future. I told them that to-night it was my full purpose to make an open declaration of my Christian faith and enter upon my work as a servant of Jesus Christ."

She told the story with a simplicity and candor and a tearful warmth that made it wonderful. I said to her that people might differ about things but that for my part I thought in that case she showed the levelness and intelligence of her faith by having the euchre party and that whatever the future held for her, I was sure the honor of the Gospel and the name of her Saviour could never suffer in her hands.

I left Dayton in a few days and never undertook to follow the case. The incident as thus related was to me irresistibly charming and I have counted it a most signal and assuring example of the saving power and the good sense of the Gospel religion.

In 1878 I assisted Dr. Frank H. Kerfoot in revival services at the Eutaw Place Baptist Church, Baltimore. The meeting drew much vital force from the Moody meetings then in progress in that city and had, besides, extraordinary features of interest and power. Among the various services held was a men's morning prayer-meeting which met in the church at 8:30 A. M., and was for the benefit of men going down into the city to their work. It was not a large meeting but it was a meeting of surpassing force and tenderness. It well illustrated, what it would be well for everybody to understand, that men are the commanding force in a great evangelistic movement. Their place is in the front and when they fail to take their place, they do hurt to the kingdom of God, and when they are endued with power from on high and

amply equipped for service, nothing can stand in their way.

One morning Baltimore was swept with a northeaster—a genuine and terrific blizzard. The winds cut like steel and the streets were carpeted with ice, the trees were loaded with icicles and travel on the streets was scant and perilous. That morning there were not more than two or three dozen men present, but the prayer-meeting room was one of the hot spots of sorely-bewintered Baltimore. I was conducting the meeting and announced that our time would be up in several minutes, and asked if there was any man present who was bound to speak.

Instantly Joshua Levering sprang to his feet. A look at him told that his soul was swept by a fiercer storm than that which was rattling the windows and blowing off the signs of the Monumental City.

“Yes,” he said, “I have something to say—something very sad to say. Last night as I was preparing for bed it broke over me with shocking force that the grandson of our old pastor, Dr. Richard Fuller, is an avowed infidel. He is a student in the John Hopkins University and, I understand, a member of an agnostic club and is quite ready to cast contempt upon that religion in which his grandfather so fully believed and which he preached with such resistless eloquence in this church. Brethren, while we have been asleep, the devil has come in, passed by us and has put his deadly charm upon that young man and drawn him away into his camp and now has him busy in his service. All night the sorrow of this thing has plowed up my soul; my eyes have refused sleep and I have been able to do nothing but cry unto the God of my old pastor for help. Let there be no division of feeling with us; there is but one thing to be done and that must be done—we are to invade the camp of the adversary, recover this boy and bring him back to the altar

of his grandfather. There must be one prayer before this meeting ends and it must not end till we have put the case before the Lord."

"Brother Joshua," I said, shaken to the depths of my soul by the spectacle of his agony, "no one can make this prayer but you. We will get down with you and join in with you, but you must be the leader."

Low down Mr. Levering fell, as if his lips would touch the dust, and every man went down with him. It was a prayer never to be written and yet never to be forgotten. It had in it the resistless might of intercession; it ached and groaned and cried with confession; it breathed mighty appeals and towards the last took on an assurance, a strength, an almost imperious demand of a confident faith which stormed the very throne.

When it ended and I returned to sober thought, I felt that we would get that young man. The meeting ended with a prayer, but the praying went on all day. That night as I was in the vestibule of the church, waiting till the prayer was over, Miss Florence Fuller, the lovely and devout aunt of the young man, drew up to me and said, "No hope; no hope at all. I tried to induce him to come to-night but he showed no interest; he instead took his skates and went to the park to spend the evening in skating."

"Don't say it, Miss Florence," I said very strongly. "God is good and God is faithful and He cannot get around Joshua Levering's prayer. We must hear from him sooner or later."

The door opened and we entered the crowded church and at the proper time I preached. The tide of heavenly feeling rolled high that night and the only thing that I remember about the sermon is that at the close of it I did an unusual thing; did it under a moment's impulse, though I had never done exactly that thing before and have never done it since.

"This ends my sermon," I said, "and if there is to be any more speaking, I open the way to hear from those who know not God. If they have anything to say, let them say on and say it before this assembly of God's friends and let them say it now."

Almost instantly a tall, commanding figure arose at the back of the room. "Yes," said he, with a voice ringing and yet very serious, "I have something to say. If there be a God, I do not know Him, and if Jesus is the Son of God and the Saviour of men, I do not know Him, but I do know that He has never saved me. If there be a God, a God who made the universe and made me, I would like to know Him, and if Jesus Christ is truly the Saviour of the lost, I wish that He would save me. If any of you know God, I wish you would speak to Him for me and tell Him that one of His creatures is lost out in the darkness and would like to know Him; and if Jesus Christ has saved any of you, I would like to ask that you will tell Him about me, a lost one, and ask if He will not show me mercy."

Instantly he fell back to his seat and the effect was instant and irresistible. Few dreamed who he was but there fell upon that great audience the conviction that there was a strong young man whom God had touched and that the smitten young man was feeling his way into the light.

I was overwhelmed with excitement and I lifted my hands, pronounced the benediction and bade the people go. As the house was emptying itself, I chanced to see Mr. Levering, like one fighting an adverse tide, beating his way towards the pulpit, and in time he sprang upon the platform and almost shouted, "There he is; that is Fuller Kendall, the young man that we prayed for this morning."

The meeting ended without my hearing anything more

from the young man, and I was not back at that church for nearly ten years and then I was in an exchange of pulpits with Dr. F. M. Ellis, then the pastor of the church. In the afternoon I attended the Chinese Sunday-school in that church, and in passing through, some one plucked my coat and drew me around. It was one of the teachers with his solitary Chinese scholar.

"Do you know me?" said the young man, rising to his feet, and I replied that I did not. "Do you remember," he continued with unconcealed eagerness, "the young man who rose one night at the end of the service during the meeting you held here with Dr. Kerfoot and said that he was out in the dark and would like to get back into the light?"

"Yes, indeed," I replied; "that was Fuller Kendall, the grandson of the imperial Richard Fuller."

"I am Fuller Kendall," he said with charming simplicity. He was fair and strong to look upon and I let my eyes feast upon his manly beauty.

"You said that you were in the dark that night," I said inquiringly; "may I ask whether you ever found the light?"

"Oh, doctor! I found it," he said in gentle ecstasy and, turning to the Chinaman and putting his finger upon his shoulder, he continued, "and I am now trying to make it shine into the benighted heart of my Chinese brother."

Twenty years after this experience I preached again at the Eutaw Place Church and told this story outright, with Joshua Levering in front of me, and the story was so reinforced and enriched by what the people knew of the case, that all hearts seemed to get a new warming and tears glistened on almost every cheek. I closed by intimating that I should be glad to hear something more of the subsequent history of this young man. I was told

that he became a lawyer, almost a rival of his grandfather in his kingly form and in his eloquence, but one of the ladies came up and said, "Evidently you have not heard ; only two or three months ago his end came and, as we stood about his grave, the common agreement was that the best of all our brethren—the very best, had been taken from us and taken because he was the readiest to go."

XIII

THE INEVITABLE BOY

POSSIBLY it was the hardships of my boyhood, my loneliness without a mother, my bothers about education, the perplexities of my religious struggles, and withal some heavenly suggestion unheard, but powerfully felt, that kindled from the beginning of my ministry a peculiar interest in boys. My first consciousness of it was in revivals, and every boy that evinced decided interest in religion instantly grappled me. This served to stimulate the interest and it was noticed that even in my college days the revival meetings that I held were marked by unusual interest among boys and girls. When I became pastor in Manchester, I soon had a Sunday-school thronged with boys and they joined the church in flocks. In almost all cases they were the sons of the poor, boys that worked, bright-minded in most cases, but with inadequate restraint at home and with countless seductions on the street and in the shops and factories where they worked. At first they would come singly, or two or three together to my study and I would talk to them. Then I commenced to teach them to sing and after a while we had what was called the boys' meeting, which lasted and grew until I left the town. From Manchester I went to the Franklin Square Church in Baltimore, and soon I found myself happy in the life and work of the boys' meeting ; from Baltimore I went to the First Baptist Church, of Petersburg, and there the boys gathered in troops, and during my seven years there the boys' meeting was the very poetry and song and pride

and power of my pastorate. There the boys were trained for the platform and their performances were read of and duplicated in many directions.

But my interest in boys never rose to its full height until May, 1875, when I became the pastor of the Grace Street Baptist Church, and where I remained for twenty-six years almost to the day. The church had a large Sunday-school, with the boys greatly in preponderance, and the first year of my work there brought about 250 new members into the church. Among them was the inevitable boy, and for that matter he was already in the church and there were scores of the unchurched boys. It seemed that I had found my inheritance at last,—banks and tides and storms of boys. The boys' meeting was founded in December of that year, and as an augury of things to come Carter Helm Jones was the first president. That meeting continued unbroken for twenty-five years and six months and went out of existence when I went out of the pastorate.

The boy is a perishable asset. I set the limit for transferring the larger boys at fifteen, though there were many cases of self-elimination and a noble company that lovingly overstayed their time. The attendance often arose towards a hundred and fifty ; that would generally be after our fruitful revival seasons, and then the tide would go down, but it rarely fell below fifty, and the regularity of the boys in attendance was a miracle of fidelity. I often said that that was the only meeting unaffected by seasons or weather. Rain and snow had little effect except upon many of the parents who were glad enough to shift their restless youngsters over to me to break the strain of the afternoon ; and as for the boys themselves they had no rheumatism, no outside engagements, no sweethearts to count and undying joy in their meeting. We usually held the meeting at half-past two

in the afternoon, but many of the boys would beg that they might come into my study a little beforehand, and precious chats and songs we often had together. The purpose in the early hour of meeting was to avoid conflict with other afternoon exercises and to afford me opportunities to meet engagements to preach or speak elsewhere at a later hour.

The exercises were largely without form but never void of spice and life. We had a great deal of singing which much of the time I had to lead, but at other times I had efficient help, given gratuitously by great-hearted men who saw the good of the meeting. How the boys did sing! Oh, the memory of it floods me with joy at this moment. Sometimes we had boys to sing solos; sometimes duets, quartettes, and they did it well; and as for the choral songs they were thrilling, heart-stirring, and the boys revelled in them with joy untellable. Men and women flocked to the meetings at times to get a taste of the boys' songs and to witness the other exercises. We had a business schedule including the calling of the roll, reading the minutes, receiving new members and having little exercises such as repeating passages of Scripture, reciting standard hymns, short speeches, written by myself, finely spoken by the boys, the never forgotten collection and incidental things as they came.

I took the utmost pains in having the choicest men of the country to address the boys. Dr. Richard Fuller of Baltimore was their orator on one occasion; Mr. Charles Pratt, the Brooklyn millionaire, told them in most effective style the story of his boyhood life; lawyers uncounted were the orators of set occasions; Bishop Newton of the Episcopal Church was always ready to come upon call; physicians came sometimes and gave such primary talks on physiological or Christian topics as they might select; eminent missionaries while in the city were often

pressed into service ; business men were always ready to come and tell the boys the ups and downs of life ; and later on my "old boys," as they rose to distinction, were called back and we would have fine reunions with them. As for myself I was always picking up things for the boys, vital, pungent, boy-enlisting things, and it was no trouble to keep the boys quiet if you had anything for them that suited their case and kind.

At times the spiritual features of the meeting became distinct. I must say that the Christian boys in the meeting were living wonders, many of them of good living and manly bearing, not a few would lead in prayer, and some were ready with their testimonies, though I never frightened them by overpressure and never reproached those who did not dare even to open their lips.

The spirit of the boys made the meeting self-perpetuating. They always had bright and cheery things to say about the meeting, were amazingly proud of it, and it was fine to see how they lured other boys in and persuaded them to join, and they delighted to bring them forward and make them known to me.

The great bulk of these boys attended worship on Sunday morning. They occupied the front seats, and in case of an overflow they bunched themselves on the platform in front of the pulpit, packed themselves on the pulpit steps and on many occasions overflowed into the pulpit. They were among my best hearers, and as we had our hymns for worship on slips, each boy had his slip and sang not only with evident enjoyment, but with a sweetness and reverence which gladdened the audience. For many years these hymn slips were distributed to the audience as it assembled by a detail of my boys, not uniformed, but yet with certain articles of dress alike ; their order was admirable, they did their work with grace and dignity, and were always the talk of strangers. It used

to be said that the other churches decorated their pulpits with flowers, but that I made bold to decorate mine with boys. I recall that on one occasion the distinguished Alvah Hovey attended our church, and he was quite extravagant in his praises of the boys, their order, their music and their good attention.

It was easy to get the boys to take little parts, repeating verses of Scripture or hymns, or sometimes delivering little speeches of which I had quite a good many prepared, and it was amazing to note the thorough self-possession which they so soon acquired. I remember one boy whose timidity was pitiable, and he implored me not to make him stand up to say anything. Finally he promised to commit one stanza of a hymn and to say it to me next Sunday afternoon in my study. He was on hand in time and was in a tremor in view of what he had to do. He stumbled through it and readily tried it again, and after several repetitions his tongue was glib and confident. Presently another boy came in, and he said it to him, and before the time for the meeting there was a group of boys clustered around us, and he rehearsed it to them. When we went down to the boys' meeting I asked him if he would not say it, and he did not hesitate to comply. It was not long before I had him in a popular entertainment with almost a thousand people present, and with unruffled composure and in a tone distinctly audible he took a part and won happy applause.

This reminds me that my boys were great money makers. They always had their collection, and hardly a boy came that did not bring a penny or more. They were always glad to prepare their songs and their dialogues, which usually I composed for them in my spare moments, and to give entertainments, and we could get no hall big enough to hold their crowds. They were often invited to go to other churches to sing and render

their dialogues for the benefit of any good cause that came along. Many times the boys would have an evening's entertainment with no outside help. One would preside, one make an address of welcome, ever so many would sing in the choruses, take part in the dialogues and other things, and then hand the baskets around, and they always came back heavy laden, for their audiences jammed every corner of the building, laughed and cried under the boyish magnetism as its spell fell upon them, and dropped in their money with a joyous liberality. It was estimated that during its lifetime over \$10,000 passed through the treasury of their society and on one occasion the church itself, finding itself in a strait, borrowed quite a sum of money from the boys. When our new church was built the boys had an entertainment which turned them out over \$600. They never made a promise of money that they did not fully redeem, and their faces glowed with pride whenever they took part in raising money for Christian purposes. When the Sunday-school had its anniversary,—an event always of great popular interest, the most eagerly anticipated features of the occasion were the boys' dialogues. Again and again groups of them went to the country and did their parts for the benefit of the country churches, and so far had their fame spread that the crowds followed them wherever they went. I sometimes took them out for a picnic in the country, and they were gladly received everywhere, for their reputation for good order, inspiring music and captivating speaking always insured them a royal welcome.

During the lifetime of the boys' meeting there were not over three boys that were requested to discontinue their attendance on account of serious disorder, and even in those cases the honorable and thoughtful boys showed grief that such a course of action was necessary. What

was exceedingly satisfactory to me was the cordial respect shown by the church for the meeting. It became one of the regular institutions, and at our annual meetings the boys' report was rendered, and always heard with strong signs of pride and satisfaction.

Something has been said about the dialogues and something more in candor ought to be said. The dialogues were somewhat elaborate, having anywhere from three to eight or ten participants. Humor and local hits almost invariably constituted a part, but the tone of these pieces was reverential, courteous, free from slang and always carried a note strong and ringing in favor of the right. They frequently hit off the fads, the cheats and the pretenses of every-day life. Sometimes they dealt with honesty; sometimes with kindness to the weak; sometimes with temperance; sometimes with the faults of boys,—indeed they touched almost every phase of life and their voice was always authoritative in support of the truth. It was a remarkable thing that new boys were worked into almost every occasion and had long parts, and yet through all the years there was never a breakdown or even a serious hitch;—so faithful were the boys in doing what they were told to do. The meeting was peculiar; its exact like I have not known anywhere. Frankly it was a great strain upon me and yet it was an unfailing fountain of life. It was a rejuvenation to mix with such buoyant, responsive and happy beings as composed that extraordinary meeting. I honestly feel that I got as much out of it as I put into it. It seemed to foster the self-respect of the boys. It was not a heavy, tiresome thing. What instruction they got was in small doses spiced and seasoned with humor and kindness. They had a sense of freedom and proprietorship in the meeting that bred in them the joy of manhood. They did not have to come. The mothers said that they

could hardly hold the boys until they got their dinner and that you know is a well-nigh incredible thing to say about a normal boy. There were many of them that came for eight years and a few for ten and scarcely missed a meeting during all that time. They met every Sunday and all the year round, unless I was out of the city. I tried the meetings in the hands of substitutes but somehow things went not well.

How did the boys turn out? I never heard of but one of them that fell into disgrace and he was a hardened boy before he came under the meeting's spell. Of course they were no extraordinary boys,—only a fair average, and yet my grateful soul bows down in thanksgiving as I think what magnificent men went out of that meeting. Many of them went into the trades, the stores, the foundries and the shops, but they grew up among the very best of their class. Ever so many of them caught a passion for learning and went off to the colleges and universities. They became a distinct class in Richmond and indeed far and wide, and I cannot even to this day go in any part of the country but they run upon me on the train, on the steamers, in the hotels, in the churches where I am advertised to speak, and their greeting almost invariably is, "Here is one of your boys; do you know me?" As for the lawyers, the doctors, the bankers, the merchants, the travellers,—I see them on all roads and get letters from them telling me of their joys and sometimes of their sorrows. It is a princely constituency, a free-born brotherhood, my pride and my crown.

This is not written to reflect upon any pastor who has no boys' meeting, nor is it intended as a plea that others shall undertake such a movement. That is not for me to say. It was of my own heart that I gave myself to this species of work, and as I was free about it I seek to trammel no man nor to browbeat him into attempting

what was such a fruitful and invigorating phase of my ministerial life.

Not very long ago I was summoned by my old church in Richmond to make on the occasion of their anniversary a reminiscent address. It was the joy of a lifetime to see the vast throng which filled the great auditorium, but what charmed me most was to see about three hundred of my boys march in as a body. In look and form they were boys no more ; many of them had their own boys with them and things showed a shocking change, but in the happy hour after the exercises were over, when I shook the strong hand, when I saw on many a face the tears which told of melted hearts, when I felt strong arms around me and heard words all freighted with love and kindness, I felt that my boys were still living and that out on the eternal hills somewhere we would have a reunion and know each other forever.

XIV

BETHEL BUILDING

IN the long run of life men gravitate towards specialties. They find the things they can do and learn to do them better by doing them so often. It would be quite impossible for me to recall all the occasions of church dedications for which my brethren have called me into service. These dedicatory engagements have taken me into many states and into many of the larger cities, but perhaps my most pleasing and comfortable recollections cluster around the little country churches in whose opening services I was brought to take part. I may as well be candid about it and say that the frequency with which I was called into these services could not be taken as tokens of unusual popularity on my part. In multitudes of cases these houses of worship were built and made ready for dedication while yet there rested upon them more or less indebtedness. To my no little embarrassment I won the reputation for some success in engineering public collections of money and I understood well enough that my selection had a very vital connection with the inevitable collection that had to be taken before the dedication of the house. It became known quite widely that I did not favor the dedication of churches upon which there were heavy mortgages or heavy indebtednesses which imperilled the building, and my agreement to conduct the service generally implied that the debt must be removed or satisfactorily provided for in advance. It was not long before I learned that it

was unwisdom itself to trust to the whims and moods of a promiscuous audience for a collection. It became my custom to go the day beforehand, hold an "inquiry meeting," as I called it, in which I had my tussle with the leading men of the church as to the financial situation. It was quite common to find that the men of the church were quite satisfied with what they had already done and they brought me on the scene with the pleasing thought that I would induce the outsiders to wipe out the rest of the debt. They usually opened the interview with me by complacently saying that they had done about all they could and that they did not expect to give any more. It was a gruesome task to assail their complacency and to explode their delusion. In a few cases they stood by their guns and utterly refused to boost the collection by additional gifts, and without exception the occasion ended in financial disaster.

Usually, however, it was possible to make them see the situation, to realize that they must lead in the giving in order to get others to give at all, and that if they would not give, the occasion would fail by turning the dedication into a tragedy and leaving upon the church the entire burden. I hardly recall a single case in which the church people, the real burden-bearers, evinced extraordinary liberality that the congregation did not fall in and render valuable help in extinguishing the debt. In almost every case the dedicatory exercises would fill the day. If after the sermon sufficient money was realized to cover the debt, the formal dedicatory service would take place at once.

If, however, there was a deficiency, the dedication was laid over until the afternoon service and another appeal for money was made, and in a few instances a third service would be held in the evening if sufficient money had not already come in, and the last thing of the entire day

would be the formal setting apart of the house for the worship of God.

To many readers this account will come as with something of a shock. They will be surprised at methods so primal, so mechanical and so straining, but it is worth while to remember that these things occurred during the reconstruction period of the South, when the country people were in a deadly struggle to rebuild their fortunes and when they had but little money for any purpose. The building of churches at such a time was arduous indeed and they had to do just the best they could. There were many extraordinary cases of magnificent giving. It was no uncommon occurrence for the tide of giving to gather such strength that it would land us far above the amount asked for and leave a welcome surplus in the treasury. These happy surprises gave a peculiar rapture and enthusiasm to the occasions. I recall one service in the dedication of a house in the smallest sort of a village and in which the church-membership was small and poor. The house had not cost much and there was a debt of a few hundred dollars. I had my inquirers' meeting, and one untutored and simple-hearted old brother opened the exercises by volunteering to say that if I could get \$30 in the collection that morning that he would think it would be a great victory. I told him with a severity somewhat simulated that I would not touch the collection unless he would promise to give \$30 on the spot. The look of amazement which he gave me was quite a comedy in itself and shook the little company into noisy merriment, and nearly every man in the room gave me \$30 each, including my good Brother Collins who had taken such a depressing view of the outlook of the occasion. When the collection came on, and these brethren one after another arose and in such cheery tones announced their subscriptions in quick succession, it started a tide that fairly

cleaned up the neighborhood. Not only was the debt paid but the modest little church found itself in condition to add ever so many comforts and ornaments of which it had not dreamed.

In a notable dedication I was associated with Dr. Geo. C. Lorimer of Boston. He was to preach in the morning and take his collection and I was to preach in the evening and make my appeal for money. Dr. Lorimer was a man of transcendent eloquence and on that occasion preached a sermon of almost unparalleled power. It was, however, one hour and a quarter in length and was preceded by a very elaborate musical schedule, and though the house was filled largely with a ticketed audience there was an almost unanimous stampede when Lorimer brought on his collection. The people were wild over the sermon and were also wild to get out when his sermon was through, and his collection suffered sore disasters. At night many of the neighboring churches of the same denomination closed their houses and came in overwhelming numbers to our service. I was in the worst stages of my first experience with grippe. I had stayed in bed all the afternoon and started for the church with deadly aches in every quarter of my anatomy, with a nausea the most dismal, with my brain almost on the verge of delirium and my voice scarcely audible to the natural ear. Lorimer presided and gave me an introduction which would have been ruinous under the most favorable circumstances, but which filled me with helpless terror. I really went to the front seriously doubting whether I could stand or speak. In some way a new vitality arose in me. My voice returned ; all sense of suffering went out and I preached without strain or inconvenience for about thirty minutes. Then came the task of asking for the money. I was in despair as to the result and stage-struck to the last degree. I blundered out the remark that I was pleased to see what a choice

and beautiful audience I had,—a thing that had no particular sense in it, but Lorimer, facetious, amiable, impudent and always full of wit, remarked that my audience might do very well, but that he wanted it understood that no man ever had such a fine audience as he had in the morning. I told him I thought I could safely claim that my crowd would never forsake me so ingloriously as his did in the morning and that if they did I thought I would go out and hang myself. The audience broke into happy laughter, put me at my ease and went quite beyond the morning audience in its contributions to the church fund. Whenever there was a pause in the giving I would ask Lorimer what he thought of the staying qualities of my constituents and would call his attention to the fact that I never lost a man. The mystery of it all, as yet unexplained, is that during the sermon and the collection I was free from pain, about as free from it and as full of comfort and enjoyment as I had ever been in my life, while for three days before I had suffered unspeakable tortures, and after the service I was hopelessly delirious before I reached my hotel, and I had a night of keenest suffering.

During my pastorate in Richmond my people erected a very noble edifice but decided there should be no appeal for money at the dedication beyond the usual weekly offering. The occasion was memorable in many respects but perhaps most of all by reason of the fact that the sermon on the occasion was preached, as I have already said, by Dr. John A. Broadus, the incomparable preacher of the South. That was his last visit to Richmond and it so chanced that not long afterwards the magnificent house was burned and that too not far from the time when Dr. Broadus finished his masterful career and entered into his heavenly rest.

In no great while and practically without debt my people replaced the house with a handsome granite structure

and laid upon me not as a burden but as a token of their gracious kindness the task of preaching the dedicatory sermon. Some things come to men in a way that they are made untellably grateful and I cannot deny myself the pleasure of commemorating here that event as one of a class of events by which that church of churches, the church of my happy memories, the church which came nearest of all earthly things to being my idol, did for me.

On a recent occasion I went to the dedication of a rural church on which there was a debt of about two thousand dollars. After reaching the grounds we summoned the leading members of the church to a conference at a point in the park which surrounded the building. We laid plans for raising the money and hammered it into the members quite vigorously that they must acquit themselves on the occasion with exemplary liberality. Meanwhile the church building was thronged with the people. It was with difficulty that the ministers edged and pushed themselves in through the rear door and reached the pulpit. The sermon was delivered and the appeal for money to wipe out the debt was suitably made; but there was a silence at once surprising and depressing. The pastor looked impotently in every direction, but his staunch old standbys were not apparent and no gifts were announced. We charitably announced that the suffocating crowd had shut out the gentlemen of the church and the collection would be looked after later, though in the inward recesses of our being we wondered whether the absence of the members was more to be accounted for on the score of their inability to get in or from a willingness, superinduced by the dread of the collection, to stay out. If the latter supposition was the true one it is due to history to say that the attempt to evade the collection did not carry well because the membership was corralled in the afternoon and the bulk of the money was

forthcoming. It transpired under the light of a varied experience that usually in taking money at a dedication for the removal of the debt that the average of money given by outsiders on such occasions is somewhere from one-fourth to one-third of what the church-membership gives at the time. In many cases the members flatter themselves that the service will attract a great throng, and in that they are usually right, and they fancy also that the visitors will be very liberal, while the result usually shows they will not.

Some have chosen to brand me as the professional church dedicator, and inasmuch as it seems that the number of such occasions on which I have been called to take part falls not very much short of two hundred, I must not resent the nickname thus imposed. It is not a work to be sought after, but it is a work that can be usefully done, and as my time in these latter days is at my own command I rejoice that I can be of some service in that way.

Largely incidental to the happy burdens that came to my shoulders in the way of church dedications came also a small dip into the precarious resort to the popular lecture. The modest avowal is entered here that neither self-interest nor ambition took any part in bringing me to the lecture platform.

The Civil War did its destructive work in manifold ways, and one of the saddest of its ways was the destruction or dismantling of houses of worship. Some were burned, some were turned into hospitals, some became temporary barracks for detachments of the army. Some were turned into stables, some were wrecked and left to the weather and to vandalism to finish the job. Indeed nearly all of the country churches were in sad need of repair, and the process of political reconstruction grievously stayed the tide of industrial progress. Money

was scarce and the people had a desperate struggle in rebuilding their fortunes. It is not hard to understand how at such a time houses of worship went to pieces and were in sore need of rehabilitation.

The good women in the little churches resorted to all kinds of expedients for gathering funds for putting on new roofs, painting the walls, buying Sunday-school literature, installing their little reed organs and many other things to get their churches into housekeeping shape. I was born in the country and seemed to be born for it. My soul was wedded to the rural churches, and it was delight unspeakable to me to go to the far-away places to hold revivals and cheer up the small households of faith as far as I could steal time from my pastorate for that purpose. Out of this grew a few lectures which I made and for which there was incessant demand from the churches in city, town and country. Sometimes I paid my own fare, gave all the income of the lecture to the suffering church and had a day of delicious fellowship with the little band of Christian workers. As a rule they would pay my expenses, which were calculated with skillful accuracy so as to avoid not giving me too little, and now and then I would be surprised to find some actual compensation in the little wad of greenbacks which would be thrust into my hands when I was starting on my return. One of the lectures was on "The Advantages of the Modern Dance," and I delivered it so many times and through so many years that a friend of mine, an unpitied satirist, suggested to me that I would change the topic and call it, "The Financial Advantages of the Modern Dance." I told him in rather severe terms that he was outraging sacred things in shedding his flippant sneers at the lecture. "That lecture," I said, with simulated resentment, "has been roofing churches, buying organs, providing libraries for Sunday-schools, laying out and enclos-

ing cemeteries, helping sewing circles, raising money to educate young preachers, replenishing missionary treasuries, provoking the nimble-footed children of Terpsichore and wearing out my best clothes for a quarter of a century."

Perhaps the next most useful lecture of the unpretentious little group had for its title, "Whose Neighbor am I?" It used to go with me to church entertainments, dedications and numberless other denominational gatherings, and in addition to the door fee which it demanded it warmed the cockles of many rustic hearts to the point of opening their purses and helping the churches in their work of reconstruction. I was urged now and then to join some of the lecture associations and try my hand in larger fields, but not for a moment did I ever think of it. That was outside of my ministerial outlook.

XIV

SHREDS OF A TRANSATLANTIC OUTING

AGOER by nature I have been a traveller by habit, and that too without being in the least sense a mountain climber, a tourist or a sightseer. Except in trivial ways I never passed out of the boundaries of our country but twice,—once into Mexico and once for a few months across the Atlantic. It would distinctly violate the very conception of this reminiscent volume to indulge in the smallest degree in the story of these modest little rambles. As for my trip across the Atlantic, it was notably commonplace in its schedules, its financial outlays, its gathering of relics, its visits to cathedrals, galleries of art, palaces, ruins, mountains, glaciers and ancient institutions of learning. All that is told in guide-books and newspapers and has in no way enlisted my attention or my energies.

In this little chapter I will throw together a few incidents which it is pleasant for me to recall, and from which I pluck some little satisfaction in jotting them down for those who may care to read them. A lady member of my church insisted that I ought not to go out of this country, and for the very odd reason that I never could be happy if I fell into conditions which rendered it impossible for me to take collections. She was quite outspoken in saying that I wouldn't stay out half my time on account of homesickness, produced by my being deprived of the ever congenial task of plucking money from the pockets of the people in the interests of humanity and religion. I sent back a little letter to an American paper, giving

some incidents of the outgoing voyage, in which I mentioned a peculiarly interesting incident. We were fortunate enough to encounter quite a formidable ocean gale, which added great spice, excitement and charm to the trip.

Among the events mentioned in my letter was the loss of a member of the ship's crew who was a bridegroom of several weeks' standing, who had promised his bride that after one more voyage he would quit the sea and devote his life to her support and happiness, and who, in the midst of the storm, was blown from near the top of a mast and sank into the sea to be heard of no more. I chanced to mention that much sympathy was felt for the bride widow, and that by request I took a public collection for her benefit and sent her quite a snug and consoling purse. It chanced that this gossipy letter fell into the hands of the good woman of my church, and she was rejoiced beyond measure. "Ah," the good woman jubilantly exclaimed, "that is good news indeed. It was almost worth having some poor man drowned to give our pastor an opportunity to take a collection for the surviving widow." I was somewhat fiercely set upon when I returned to America, that I had actually drowned a sailor in order to enjoy the luxury of a collection.

The friend who went abroad with me, Dr. L. R. Thornhill, was simply invaluable in looking after luggage, schedules, hotels and other matters of comfort, but I blush to say that he suffered untold cruelties at my hands, although I loved him ardently in my normal moods, but when I had an acute case of travel-tire I hated him with all possible abnormal ferocities. I remember particularly that in Florence I seriously meditated an open break with him, and felt thoroughly that to break his neck would be a sweeter pastime than seeing St. Peter's or lounging in gondolas in Venice. We met a

friend living in Italy, who expressed the utmost surprise that we seemed really attached to each other, and I asked him if he imagined that we elected to travel together because of strong mutual animosities. It was after this I had my travel tire.

"Not at all," he said with candid humor. "I generally notice that [Americans who set out to travel together usually fall out and part before they get to Italy."

My fellow traveller had one habit which to my taste was despicable,—he wore red flannel in the summer. As we had our stateroom together, and as I have had all my life a mortal antagonism to red flannel, I requested him either to consign these crimson nether garments to a watery grave or to hire storage room in the steerage for keeping his loathsome garb. When we were entering Italy the custom-house officer gravelled into our trunks to see if we were smugglers or any other unscrupulous sort, and found the change of this flannel in his valise. They were horrified. They believed that he was wearing the uniform of the anarchist and took my friend in charge. I confess frankly that I was greatly delighted. I was glad they caught him, and while I could not say one word in Italian, yet with all dramatic gesture, with many outbreaks of joy, I besought them to take him and execute him as one of the robbers of the Apenines.

Honestly the desperate satisfaction I felt in cherishing the worst possible thoughts and feelings against my unsuspecting victim was something most entertaining to me. I actually meditated an abrupt and scornful break with him, to be varied with such assurances of undying contempt, and this pleased me thoroughly. Meanwhile he was as usual the same that I had been cherishing as a friend for a number of years, and he was apparently in no degree conscious of any eruptive antagonisms existing within my bosom.

Finally my feelings sullenly walked out and proclaimed a strike. I tumbled into a hopeless collapse, staggered into my hotel, took to my bed. My languor bordered on dissolution, and a grim pessimism enthralled my being. Finally sleep, never so blessed before, wrapped me in its embrace, and for ever so many hours Florence, the home of art, music and culture, shrank far beyond my dreaming. I would blush to tell how utterly I turned from all the things of earth that pleased me, and slept my fatigues away. When finally I recovered consciousness I found myself composed, clear-headed, grievously hungry and fully restored to fellowship with my good friend Thornhill.

I had a friend of many years' standing,—a Virginian and withal a most courtly, literary and public-spirited gentleman, Rev. George B. Taylor, D. D., at that time superintendent of American Baptist Missions in the city of Rome. He had heard of my coming, and had written me that he would be summering in the Apennine mountains, and that I must join him there for all the time that I could spare. In subsequent pages I present the account of my adventure, successful in the end, of trying to find the dwelling-place of this cherished friend of my early days.

I must say very frankly that of all countries which I visited, Scotland charmed me most. There is one incident connected with my brief sojourn in the land of the thistle which will, in part at least, indicate the social experiences which came to me while in Scotland, and which I can never recall without grateful emotion.

When I decided to take my little spin across the Atlantic a friend, learning of my purpose to go, brought me quite a formidable letter of introduction to the late Mr. John C. Graham of Glasgow, Scotland, at that time the

president of the Scotch Convention of Baptists. As a fact, I was not out for multiplying acquaintances, and I always felt that I was under suspicion with almost any sort of an introduction in my hand, but the gentleman who gave it to me was precise, exacting, and, as I knew, would have to be reckoned with when I got back.

My ship dropped me out at Glasgow, and with a somewhat selfish sense of duty I raided the premises of Mr. Graham, whom I had not seen and who I inwardly feared was in no high mood to see me. The charming sense of a task well performed pervaded me when I ascertained that Mr. Graham and his family were summering on some unknown shore of Scotia, and so I sailed off for Northern Scotland and careered up and down land and sea until I found myself packing my trunk in London and getting ready to set forth for Glasgow, where I was to reëmbark for America. I was sensibly disgruntled to find the solemn letter of my friend, which, after articulating my supposititious virtues, commended me to the endearments of Mr. Graham.

Once more I faced the question of encountering the author of the recommendatory letter, and so I slipped the letter in my vest pocket and determined to ring the Graham door-bell one more time. A most gracious and charming lady met me at the door and with the utmost courtesy directed me to the office of Mr. Graham. I thought soberly that if the Lord had been as careful in building the yet unseen Mr. Graham as He evidently had been in the creation of that engaging woman, I would be glad to get a glimpse of the face and form of that masculine piece of His handiwork.

It turned out that Mr. Graham was a prominent railroad officer, and his office was within the precincts of the Glasgow station of that road. To say this would be about equal to undertaking to find a house in a town of a thou-

sand people without any special direction. I was directed this way, then that way, then another way, then around somewhere, then back again, until I was far more concerned as to whether I would ever find my way out than I was whether I would find Mr. Graham.

Finally, I struck a man in working clothes who had a heart, also a head. He informed me that he would take me straight to Mr. Graham's office. In vain I fumbled in my pocket for that letter which was to give me my character and ambled along as if going to the slaughter pen or some other place of relief. After running me a race amid cars, passages, stairways and short turns, he jerked open a door and said, "Mr. Graham, a gentleman wishes to see you," and shot out, as much as to say that his part was done and he was determined not to witness the meeting. I stopped, "framed in the door," according to the tiresome phrase of the day, quite tired myself.

A gentleman, immense in frame and with a head colossal and in part barren of its locks, threw up his golden-rimmed spectacles to the top of his head, whirled suddenly in his revolving chair towards me and fixed two large and truly magnificent eyes upon me. His gaze was keen enough to clip the buttons on my clothes and uncover me for inspection, and yet behind it there was something gracious, as seen in the distance.

"Excuse me, Mr. Graham," I said, doing my best to look solemn like a Scotchman, "let not my presence alarm you. I do not come to ask for anything; not that I have much, but I am an American, and I have my return ticket and enough to get me on the boat. A friend of yourself in Richmond, Va., was much set on my shaking your hand and presenting his compliments, and to show you that you were not being imposed upon, gave me a good character, sketched with his own pen—an excellent letter, indeed, which I discovered two or three

minutes ago that I had lost. As I am here for nothing on the earth except to shake your hand, that I may tell Mr. Samuel S. Clopton that I had seen you (truly an easy thing to do if you got anywhere in his neighborhood) and had grasped your hand ; if now," I said with ponderous dignity, "you are willing to shake my hand, we will have the ceremony at once and close the exercises."

I paused a full period's length and some more over and yet he looked at me so. I said to him that in the event he declined to have the hand-shake, I would not take it ill ; that I had lived that long without shaking hands with him and thought that by hard pulling I might make the rest of the trip, even though deprived of that privilege.

"I wish to say to you, sir," he said in a tone that fairly shook the shoes on my feet, "I hardly find myself in a humor to shake your hand, sir. You have not treated me with that respect to which I think a friend of Dr. Clopton's is fairly entitled. You tell me that you are to take the American steamer to-morrow afternoon. You have so schemed, sir, as to make it impossible for me to give you an adequate taste of old Scotia's hospitality. Where is your luggage, I would like to ask, sir ?"

"My trunk has gone to the steamer and my hand baggage is at the Victoria Hotel," I answered, much amused and infinitely interested in the powerful person before me.

"My mon will call for it and you will be in my charge until you set your foot upon that ship for America."

I told him with imperturbable coolness that I did not doubt at all that his mon was an ideal official and would do right by my luggage, but that I had a friend with me and I thought that I would retain the oversight of my luggage and stay with my friend.

"No, sir," he said, "you will do no such thing, except that your friend will stay with you and both of you will stay at my house, but practically nothing will be done for your entertainment because of your grievously bad conduct in not reporting to me until on the very eve of quitting the country. I will take you to Hamilton Palace; I will have some gentlemen to come in and take dinner with you to-night; I will notify my pastor that you will preach for us to-night, and I, with my family, will take you down to Greenoch to-morrow evening and see you on your steamer. Poor treatment, I admit, but you are to blame for its not being better."

Altogether, it struck me that it was the shrewdest and most delightful hit off in the way of hospitality that I had met, and it would be impossible to tell of the charms, the humor, the merriment, the banter and, with all, the winsome kindnesses of that memorable visit. Big as he was, he had the heart of a child, the soul of a saint, the spirit of the hero and the grace of the Christian gentleman. Well-nigh every hour of that and the following day was packed with some pleasing device, some happy trip, some rare sight, the unexpected dropping in of friends and the homelike, brimming attentions of the family. It took but a little while to shatter every barrier, to thaw out every restriction and to shake us together in the unity of a good understanding and a faith that knew no doubt.

I found in his family a number of children and among them a very sensible and timid daughter, an ideal Scotch maiden, too timid to be brave and too brave to be timid and just right to be both. Before the time of my departure came I extended a formal and most cordial invitation to this young woman to make a visit to my daughters in Richmond, Va., and the parental consent was guardedly but finally given. Several months later she crossed the ocean without an acquaintance, was met

at the pier in New York and transferred to the Richmond train, and before she reached our station I swung on to the train and all lingering anxieties flew out of the window and for three months she was the joy of our house. Nor was that all. Those hard-headed Scotch people complained that they were brought under obligation, and the old gentleman, acting as spokesman, said that the account had to be squared or that we would be roundly abused if it was not done; but it was done. Two years afterwards two members of my family (so unseemly was our eagerness to square the account), my wife and daughter, ran over to Glasgow and gave the Graham house all the trouble that they could think of, which, after all, in the eyes of the Grahams, consisted in not extending their visit. A thousand pleasing memories hover around 183 St. George Street.

Time has done sad things with that ideal home. Death has called its honored head into the invisible world, but he went full of honor and faith, and this day I do honor to the memory of an uncommon man. His soul was clean as the sunlight, his word was as good as the King's seal, his home was lit with virtue, honor and godliness, and his life was an offering upon the altar, acceptable unto God.

Another pleasing and unexpected episode marked my excursion through Northern Scotland. I found two gentlemen on the packet, neither of whose names I could recall, and yet the face of each one carried certain familiar features. One of them was massive, thoughtful and quiet; the other, restive, busy with his pen and constantly reading things or talking things to his sober companion. It vexed me greatly that I could not keep my eyes off of them, and particularly did I find myself eyeing the larger and more dignified of the two. I

would have been quite ashamed of my curiosity except that every time I flung my furtive glances at him, our eyes met in baffled curiosity.

By some odd chance our impulses rolled us together. At one time we were almost in touch on the upper deck when a rain, one of the inevitable and ever-recurring rains, stampeded us and we went down in the salon and, sure enough, we took our seats facing each other and glared at one another as if about ready for mortal combat.

"Every time I have looked at you to-day," I said to him in a grim and resentful tone, "I have found you watching me as with some deadly purpose."

"I believe, sir, that your remark is substantially true," said the portly and white-haired stranger, "but I do believe I can truthfully say that I have not looked at you one time to-day that I did not catch you looking at me."

"I confess it," I said, without any break in my lofty and dignified tone, "for it is very natural to watch the man who you find is constantly watching you and, besides, I have a vague, almost a distinct, conviction that somewhere on terra firma I have had a vision of you before."

"Exactly so, my good stranger," the man of the whited locks responded. "I appreciate what you say exactly; that is what is the matter with me. I not only suspect that I have seen you, but I am almost ready to think that I have gotten you down to the last dot of identity."

I told him that probably both of us were to see that each of us was mistaken but that I proposed that we take a guess at each other and, if we missed, we would then take up the question as to whether our looks interested each other enough to incline us to reveal ourselves. The suggestion was accordingly adopted and he told me to fire away.

"A. J. Gordon of Boston," said I; "now take your trial on me."

"W. E. Hatcher, Richmond, Va.," he said, and I bowed acquiescence.

I found that his friend was Dr. A. T. Pierson, that they had both been attending a missionary conference in England and were on their way to Inverness to hold missionary meetings on the following day, which was Sunday. Those who travel know the delight of picking up genial and resourceful companionship along the way, and who could find a nobler spirit than Dr. Gordon? He and his friend gave me a memorably rich and stimulating Sabbath at Inverness.

The story which follows reveals the ups and downs of two awkward and inexperienced tourists, but it has to be reluctantly admitted that the peril of the night was hardly sufficient to add spice to the adventure. The story is in reality a memorial of Dr. George B. Taylor, a chieftain among my friends.

At midnight on a Saturday night, in the month of September, I tumbled, sick and black with dirt, into a hotel in the city of Pisa, Italy. My sickness was distinctly traceable to a slice of Bologna sausage picked up at Genoa, and my blackness was fairly won by travelling eighty miles in the tunnels of that railway which skirts the Mediterranean shore between Genoa and Pisa. Being thus out of kelter both outside and in, I took the last half of the night to adjust myself to better conditions and to hammer myself into shape for the Sabbath. For lack of something better, I took that blessed day to study the Leaning Tower, the historic clock and the mendicant gang which huddled about the doors of the cathedral. It was an empty and dismal day and my soul cried out for fellowship, and in my extremity I told my companion of

the journey that I thought the most religious thing that I could think of, as possible on that day, was to enter the Apenines and find Dr. George B. Taylor. This gentleman was rare and notable among the sons of men. We had grown a friendship in America in our callow days which not many years of separation had in any sense abated. Already for more than a score of years Dr. Taylor had been the official head of missionary work in Italy as conducted by my denomination in the southern part of the American Republic. He had heard of my coming and had written me that he was summering in a little town, Cutialano. That was a perilously inadequate directory for leading an untravelled American to the designated point. Nevertheless we set forth and after many mishaps, a change of railroads which was made in an unknown tongue, and an unavailing search for a few drops of water to quench the most deadly thirst that I at least had ever known, we heard the flagman cry out something which sounded faintly like Pracchia. We alighted from the train. It was about half-way between sundown and the darkness of the night. The place—if indeed it was a place, squatted its shabby houses amid the mountain crags, and proved to be, by all odds, the most filthy and abhorrent locality that my eyes had ever looked upon. There was a four-roomed, dirty structure pointed out as the hotel, and it was seething with about as pestiferous a mob of human filth as the earth could afford. Besides, the station was infested with a noisy brood of loiterers snatching at our baggage, insisting on seizing us and carrying us whithersoever they would, and making the mountains hideous with their malevolent noises. We were told that there was no hope of our getting supper or bed, whereupon I held a thanksgiving service with myself right on the spot. We two knew not a word of Italian and our speech attracted not one

who could speak English. Finally I stumbled upon a cabman—a huge, fiery-faced, and half drunken fellow whose bearing set us against him at once, and all the more so as the cab bore many marks of hard usage and creaking infirmities, and as the horse, shrivelled, dejected, and with ribs bespeaking a starving rate of living, seemed nigh to his end. I shrieked, “Cutialano!” until finally and besottedly he responded, “Cutialano.” A little proud of my ingenuity, I held up my ten fingers and said, “lyras,” which in a Christian country would have meant that we would give him two dollars to take us to Cutialano. He shook his head negatively. Then I put up my hands again with ten fingers, and suddenly lowering my fingers and leaving my thumbs erect, I gave him to understand that we would make it twelve lyras, and that brought a smile and a friendly grunt which closed the bargain. It was then night and the distance fifteen miles and the route up mountains, over and down mountains, through deep valleys, along splashing streams and oftentimes beneath or over hanging rocks or between boulders on the one side, and precipices on the other. In our favor was very brilliant moonlight, excellent roads and groups of people strolling the narrow ways as we went along. My friend who was with me had read books about the mountain bandits of Italy, their robberies and their murderings, and his imagination gave him much trouble and at times his vivid pictures of our dangers made me think of the awful inconvenience and the serious detentions that would result if, instigated by a belief in our great wealth, a robber band should fall afoul of us and do us their usual way. At one point in the road where the moon could not get in its friendly work, our driver sprang from his seat and blended himself into the general darkness, and for quite a while we could hear men talking in solemn and measured tones and this went

on a good while. It reminded my friend of more robber literature which he had read and prompted me to sing a song, which, if it did not bubble out of a cheerful soul, was intended to make that impression upon the low-voiced sons of darkness who seemed to be planning for an inquest over our remains after they had taken everything else that they were not willing to have remain. Presently two men appeared leading a horse, and in the most businesslike way, began to hitch him in tandem style in front of our equine dwarf which had brought us thus far. It turned out that we were about to ascend a fearful hill and this extra force was brought in to meet the emergency. Both men rode on the driver's seat, and the new man proved to be quite loquacious, emphasizing his utterances with fierce gesticulation ; not one word of all he said could we understand, but I had already learned that when cabmen or guides grew garrulous in a language which we knew not, their conversation had something to do with money. But in this case I decided to let the performance continue to the top of the hill. Suddenly, however, we were stopped and the man turned squarely around on us and making as well as he could a beer or wine mug of his hand he applied it to his lips. That was a language which we readily understood and we decided that it meant that he expected a treat at our hands for hauling us up the steep. I told my friend that ordinarily my principles utterly forbade my treating men to liquid intoxicants, especially on Sunday night, and asked him if he did not think it would be a good time for him to repeat one of his able temperance addresses for these two weak Italian brethren. This proposition failed and we decided that in view of the valuable aid that this cabman had rendered us we would take up a small collection in his interest, and that inasmuch as we could not get off the lecture we would leave it to the driver's honor—provided he owned

any article of that sort, not to spend the money in an improper way.

After descending that mountain we came to what we took to be a summer boarding-house. It was quite an extensive and handsome building, and a number of good looking women with a decided business look attached to them came out, and very voluminously entreated us to do something, but what we could not understand. I thought at that moment of the glory of the old Latin tongue, of my joy in its study, of my passionate enthusiasm over Ovid, Cæsar, Virgil, Juvenile, Cicero, and some besides. Then as I sat there pelted, jagged, slashed up on that fair moonlight night with such lingual jargon, and with such maddening effect, I felt that my religion was slashed into tatters and in sore need of repair. But even at that desperate moment I still believed that if I could get to my friend of friends, Dr. Taylor, his godly humor and his heavenly philosophy could save even me. So that while the Italian women were clamoring for me to get out and spend the night, and while the cabman of the glaring face stood at the open door of the cab, and by threatening gestures ordered me to get out, I simply sat still and filled in the silent spaces with the emphatic cry, "Cutialano!" "Cutialano!" And in the course of time I subdued the hospitable mob. They finally held a council of war or something else and the cabman came back with new crimson shades on his cheeks and deluged me with unintelligible abuse—so at least I thought he did—and then—well, then I piped out with unruffled composure, "Cu-ti-a-lano!" The man sprang upon his seat and such a cruel scourging he inflicted upon his little horse that it made my blood boil, but it being Sunday, I forbore to thrash the wretch as he deserved, and as I was much inclined to do, if all the external conditions had been safe and favorable for such a task.

As we went sweeping along we overtook a carriage, and our driver, after some chat with the man ahead, leaped out, threw open the cab door, and in a very curt way ordered us to get out. In some way we were made to understand that the other conveyance would take us to Cutialano. No tears were shed in parting with the cabman of the fiery cheeks and the grating voice.

Finally our new charioteer sang out very assuringly : "*Cutialano.*" Far up on the open mountainside we glimpsed the twinkling lights which served to tell us that the end of our journey was at hand, and that my noble Dr. Taylor was in easy reach. The climb of that hill, no small attainment in itself, brought us to an open square in which all the town seemed to have emptied itself. Sure enough, it was a giddy, boisterous throng, and they swarmed around us with embarrassing familiarity, each vying with the rest in taking charge of us for commercial purposes. In time I made them understand that I was an American, and instantly scores of voices were shouting, "'Merikee ! 'Merikee ! 'Merikee !" which meant that they were looking for some one who could talk to us. They found a lad who must have claimed that he could speak English, for they brought him forward with noisy delight. He proved entirely inadequate to the occasion, for he could not speak any English word intelligently. After much perplexity I called out, "Dr. Taylor," putting great emphasis on the last syllable in each word. The crowd caught the word instantly, and the whole park rang with a continuous cry of "Dr. Taylor," while many who looked upon us as fair game for their commercial tricks hung around us hoping to be called into service. There stood near the carriage, distinctly visible under the radiant beams of the moon, a man plain of dress and sober of mien, who took no part in the restless excitements of the scene. It was not hard to make him understand that I

wished him to take me to Dr. Taylor's house, which he did in an orderly and prompt manner. When we reached the gate he pointed to the house with the simple utterance: "Dr. Taylor." In every fibre of my being I was tremulous with a joy unspeakable. The man struck the door, and instantly movements on the inside of the house assured us that the inmates were up and awake. Very quickly the door opened, and I caught the outline of two young ladies, but they had outgrown me, and I was about to begin the task of introducing my friend and myself, when the face of Dr. Taylor—that dear, open, intellectual, winsome, classic face upon which I had often looked, and from which I had plucked comfort and light many, many times, came in plain view in the entry. The joy of that moment was great indeed, after our long separation, and after the nocturnal journey with its straining experiences. I was simply entranced with the sight of that countenance. As the full light from the lamp fell upon my face he recognized me instantly, and with open arms and with eyes suddenly dimmed with tears, took me to his heart as he exclaimed: "Oh, Brother William, I have waited for you so long, and longed for you so much! I feel you bring with you my kindred and my country!" But enough! I grow too sentimental. I must call off my pen. The happiness of the days which followed would be to others nothing if told to them, but it is all the more to my old heart, if it may remain untold.

Dr. Taylor pointed out the hiding-place of Cataline, the arch conspirator of his day. Those grim crags of the Apennines furnished him a retreat so far from the public eye that he could do his deadly work without serious dread of being overtaken. The doctor knew so much about the traitor, and made the story so vivid, that I had a weird dread that the spirit of the deceased conspirator still wandered through those solitary haunts, and was

liable to mistake me for a messenger of vengeance, and to do me up beyond repair before I knew what was going on. But my imagination has always had a superstitious attachment, and my best friends have charged me with having a constitutional horror of the unconfined ghosts of the wicked, but it is a simple act of justice to Mr. Cataline to say that neither he nor any of his remains interfered with my liberty or pleasure during my happy sojourn in the Apenines.

I put that stay with Dr. Taylor as among the most unique, memorable, and in many respects, the most delightful of all the experiences of my foreign travel which, while if not very extensive, was rich in incidents and surprises.

It may be allowable to add another bit of experience which occurred with me on my arrival in the city of Rome. I reached there on a train at the unsentimental hour of seven in the morning. The train emptied its throngs of passengers on the platform and I, unwashed and out of kelter, went shambling down the walkway. Above all the clatter and confusion of the moment, I heard a voice, solemn as the tomb, repeating something in a way so dismal and sepulchral, that it brought me to a shiver. It continued its fearful cry until I distinguished, partially at first, but distinctly enough after a while, that the burden of the croaker was, "Dr. Hatcher," and it was repeated with every other breath, and with an ever-increasing and accusing solemnity. Oh, my country and my kindred, what could it mean? Was the avenger after me? It looked so, for the cry drew nearer and nearer, until I found myself confronted by a very respectable looking man, the very man who was taking all of those unearthly liberties with my name. He advanced on me quite aggressively and said, "You! you, are you, are you, Dr. Hatcher?" I admitted rather regretfully that I was

something of the sort he was talking about, and awaited developments. His face suddenly lit with friendly light, and he told me that he was Rev. Dr. Paschetto, the pastor of the Baptist church in that city, and that Dr. Taylor had asked him to meet me at the station, though the doctor had said nothing to me about it. I asked him how he identified me, and he replied that he picked out the man who had the tallest hat, supposing that in that way he would find the man whose name was *Hatcher*. It was my beaver which betrayed me. The noble kindnesses of that worthy gentleman are beyond forgetting.

XVI

GLAD DAYS WITH SPURGEON

IT was when I was a college student at Richmond, Va., that I first saw the name of Spurgeon, and I was struck with the fact that although he was fast attaining a world-wide fame as a preacher he was only five weeks older than I was. He excited intensely my admiration and there sprang up in me a desire to see him, which, however, it took a third of a century for me to realize. It was no mean part of my eagerness for a little run beyond the sea that I might hear this man, now in the zenith of his glory, and a figure of far-reaching renown. At that time there was quite a sharp controversy within the Baptist family of England, known as the Down Grade Movement and in which Mr. Spurgeon was deeply involved. There may have been some prevision on my part in arranging with the New York *Examiner* to write up that controversy, as in that way I might get closer to Spurgeon, though I cannot recall that I was sensibly influenced by that consideration. A warm personal friend of mine in New York and also Mr. Spurgeon's literary representative in this country, without my knowledge, sent a letter to Mr. Spurgeon, announcing my coming and also telling him of my arrangement with the *Examiner*. On the first Sunday that I was in London I was introduced to Mr. Spurgeon and he indicated at once that he was informed as to my presence in that city. With characteristic hospitality he invited me to spend the following Saturday at his home, an honor which I accepted with genuine pleasure. He

added to my obligations by authorizing me to invite two of my American friends to accompany me,—Rev. Dr. Henry McDonald of Georgia, and Rev. L. R. Thornhill of Virginia.

That day can never be forgotten and is cherished all the more gratefully because it opened the way for many happy and intimate associations with this eminent minister of God afterwards.

It was at the stroke of one when we rang the bell. The door was opened by the butler and we asked if Mr. Spurgeon was at home.

“Yes,” Mr. Spurgeon himself replied, quite far back in the hall, though approaching. “I am at home and you command my respect at the outset by showing your respect for time. Many of those who come to this house seem to live in eternity and have no need of clocks ; but I, a common mortal, live in time and find every moment of it too precious to waste.”

I noticed that he had on a well-worn slouch hat, and a gray alpaca duster which nearly touched the floor. His greeting was as informal as you would likely receive from a warm-hearted American farmer, and soon we were involved in a conversation informal but easily sustained. Mr. Spurgeon took an eager part in this, but also with silent courtesy divided time with the rest of us. He handed cigars and those who took them smoked except myself, I taking one and toying with it but not smoking. The Down Grade Movement came in for extended discussion, which revealed the fact that Mr. Spurgeon was feeling keenly the strain of it, and yet his bearing was lofty and magnanimous to a degree. He said that he honored a candid opponent and found unspeakable support in friends who were decided and trustworthy, but that to him the heaviest strain of his life was to endure those who were on both sides of the conflict. The nearest

that he ever came in my hearing to bitterness was when he uttered a philippic against ingratitude. He said that he asked no man to bend to him because he did him a kindness, but that he was too human to bear patiently the secret thrusts of those who before had asked his confidence and feasted on his bounty.

“Why,” he said with kindling resentment, “a preacher lost all of his teeth and with it his power of articulation, and in my sympathy I gave him a full set of artificial teeth and he turned around and bit me with them.”

I confess there was something admirable in the high note of indignation and resentment with which he uttered his contempt for the ingrate. Not long after this I left London and was gone quite a while. In the early autumn I returned for a stay of several weeks and during that time I was many times in his company and had the amplest opportunities of contact and comradeship with him. He appointed a day which the students of his college were to spend with him, and invited me to join the party, a pleasure which I ardently anticipated. A pitiless rain drenched the grounds and made it impossible for him to entertain the boys. Soon after he wrote me a note saying that he had to go down to Leightonstone to the reopening of the church in which that noted pioneer of the far back days, Elder Bradford, preached, and he invited me to accompany him as his guest. We were quite magnificently entertained by a distinguished London author. The service occurred in the afternoon and Mr. Spurgeon preached the same sermon which I heard him deliver in his tabernacle on the previous Sunday evening. After the service we went for a season into the pastor's office and while there I saw Spurgeon in a new rôle. A weary-eyed and somewhat ill-dressed man sprang into the room unbidden and said with great excitement :

"Mr. Spurgeon, God has given me a vision; He showed me an open door and told me that that door was the door to your college and He told me I must go through that door and get in your school and get ready to be a great preacher."

"Very well, my man," said Spurgeon good-naturedly but with a dangerous accent. "Did you say the Lord showed you all that?"

"Yes, sir," the man replied. "He showed me all that."

"Then let me tell you," Spurgeon continued, "as soon as He shows it to me I'll send for you."

There was a certain snap and bang in the closing part of that sentence which disturbed the air, and the man as if terrified dashed out as suddenly as he had come in.

There was a gentleman living possibly a dozen miles from Leightonstone, at a little town called Louton, whose name was Gould. He was a friend of Mr. Spurgeon in the opening days of his ministry and it was through him that Mr. Spurgeon was first called to London. They were fast friends, and the admiration and devotion which the old gentleman had for this peerless metropolitan preacher seemed close akin to worship. He came up to the dedication in his magnificent carriage to take Mr. Spurgeon and myself to his home to spend the night. The rain was falling in a flood and the air was heavy and cold, and it was quite a ride that we had. As we went along, Mr. Spurgeon mentioned that he had a sick member of his church somewhere near the road which we were travelling and he was anxious to call on him. Mr. Gould said it was out of the question. Mr. Spurgeon said that the man was very ill and that he feared that if he did not see him then, he never would. Mr. Gould still refused. Mr. Spurgeon said that he had promised to call on the man and he hated to break his promise, but Mr. Gould

stiffly maintained his ground and said it would be cruel on the horses. Spurgeon had something to say as to whether a Christian man was worth less than two horses, or something of that sort. Mr. Gould said the driver was a man and that mercy ought to be shown to him ; whereupon Mr. Spurgeon opened the door, stated the case to the driver and asked him if he would be willing to take him to the place.

"Lord, Mr. Spurgeon," said the man, "I'd be willin' ter drive yer anywhere, sir."

"All right, John, drive ahead ; we will go."

Mr. Gould was defeated and manifestly enjoyed it. As for myself, I looked at Spurgeon and realized on the spot that it was his indomitable spirit, his bull-headed but heaven-born determination that had made him the most eminent preacher of the nineteenth century. Faithfulness in that which was least had made him triumphant in that which was great.

Mr. Gould had quite an ample and, indeed, elegant home. He invited also a number of his prominent neighbors to take dinner with Mr. Spurgeon,—a dinner which commenced about ten, and ended about midnight. The parlors were well filled, and, although not well, Mr. Spurgeon bore himself superbly, mingling with the people, joining in cordial fashion in the chat, and now and then, with an admiring group around him, he talked gloriously, mixing seriousness and humor, telling a story, cracking a jest, stirring everybody to joyous laughter and filling his listeners with admiration and delight. During the evening Mr. Gould, with great deference and modesty, requested Mr. Spurgeon to repeat a story which he had heard him tell before. Spurgeon was most reluctant, and sought to escape the appeal, but the company joined in and pressed him so hard, that he finally said that if I would tell a story he would come to terms.

I refused outright and told him to fight his own battle ; and then the company, in order to carry their point with Mr. Spurgeon, joined in upon me.

"Have you nothing to tell?" inquired Mr. Spurgeon.

"Yes, I have things to tell," I said quite flatly, "but this is not my time. I am only a voice crying in the wilderness, and ought not to be used in order to make Mr. Spurgeon do his duty."

Finally, however, the stubborn Britons forced me to surrender and I told the story of "Miss Sally and the Gray Mare," probably influenced in part by a very human desire to drive Mr. Spurgeon into a corner. He told his story well and greatly amused his little audience. Indeed, he knew how to tell a story. He could train it to the point and explode it at the fateful moment. I was low-spirited about my story and doubted whether I had reached that mysterious point in an Englishman's make-up where the sense of humor dwells, though I must candidly say they were amply demonstrative.

The next Sunday I dined with Mr. Spurgeon in the home of one of the most distinguished families of his tabernacle, and after dinner he said to me :

"Tell them the story of 'Miss Sally and the Gray Mare,' " but I told him that the story was very worldly-minded and not suitable for Sunday use. He said there was ever so much good doctrine in the story and good for seven days in the week, and so I had to tell it again. Later on, if the reader travels that far, he may find the story of "Miss Sally and the Gray Mare," which won its place in this volume because Mr. Spurgeon approved of it.

It was a great dinner spread that night in the Gould mansion, and it would be pleasant indeed to enlarge upon the social abandon and exuberant freedom of the dinner-party.

When the lady of the house asked Mr. Spurgeon if he

would have coffee, he answered that he would, but that it must be without sugar. As my seat was near to his, I noticed that when the coffee was set before him, he took out a little round paper box, opened it, took up a small tablet and pinched the tiniest piece off and dropped it into the coffee. My curiosity took up the subject and asked for light. He said that it was saccharin; that it took 350 pounds of sugar to make one pound of saccharin and that he used it because the sugar itself aggravated his rheumatic gout, from which, as is generally known, he was an almost constant sufferer. Indeed, he told me that he did not know what it was to have a moment entirely free from pain, and said that it had been that way for a full score of years. Think of it. It was under all that debility and acute suffering that he did the most valuable part of his work as a student, a preacher, an author, a lecturer and a man of the people.

When the guests rose from the table it was past midnight and they went at once for their wraps; their carriages lined up at the front and in a few moments only the Goulds and Mr. Spurgeon and myself were left. Almost immediately Mr. Gould brought out the cigars and handed them to Mr. Spurgeon.

“No,” said Mr. Spurgeon, doggedly, “I will not smoke. This American here,” pointing at me, “was over at my house last summer and I offered him a cigar. He took it but was too good to smoke it, and I am afraid that such a man as I am ought not to smoke in his presence.”

I gave forth no sign and the cigars were taken away and we began to rekindle the conversation when Mr. Gould, bethinking himself, brought the cigars and offered them to me. I thanked him quietly, took the cigar, lit it, turned my back to Mr. Spurgeon and began to smoke, for the first time in full ten years. The clouds of smoke

were visible in the room but almost absolute silence reigned.

"Mr. Gould," said Spurgeon, in a grimly humorous tone, "bring that box of cigars back. This is a better man than I took him to be and I believe I will join him in his smoke."

That was all that was said. He never asked me whether I often smoked or not and it ended at that.

We occupied different rooms after retiring for the night, but our doors were open and we passed back and forth and chatted I know not how far into the night.

The next morning we went out to the little station for the train to London and in some way it was belated. Spurgeon grew weary of standing, and they brought him a chair and he sat in the door of the little station. The agent or guard was very busy with his tasks and at first evidently took no note of the great preacher. In passing him, however, he recognized him, and his behavior was something not to be forgotten. He sprang back, took off his railroad cap, and bowed almost to the ground.

"Oh, Mr. Spurgeon, I am guilty, indeed, and beg for mercy. Here you are, and I did not know you," he said with manifest pain, "and this, too, after it was your sermon that brought to me the light of salvation. I am ashamed of myself and I ask you to forgive me."

Thus spoke the guard, and his words were deeply impressive. They drew the little company quietly around. Mr. Spurgeon was strongly moved.

"Oh, my man," he said, "reproach not yourself. You were busy with your duties, as all of us ought to be; and why should you be looking at me? It is enough to hear that I did you good and helped you find the way. Take my hand, my brother, and let us greet each other in the name of our common Lord."

They had their hand-grasp and the man stepped back, and said with untellable sweetness :

“Good-bye, Mr. Spurgeon, good-bye ! We shall know each other better when the mists have rolled away.”

No more delightful incident have I ever witnessed. It fell upon the people like the dews of Hermon and heaven seemed very near.

We were soon in London where Mr. Spurgeon’s carriage was waiting, and we were driven immediately to his orphanage, where we spent the bulk of the day. As we approached the entrance, he pointed from the open carriage and said : “Yonder is my bank, where I get my money for taking care of my family of 500 children.”

I told him, somewhat grumblingly, that I did not need to have very much to do with banks, but ordinarily I could see a bank when it was in front of me, but that I didn’t see any bank about there. We were then about to pass under an archway and pointing up to the wall he said, “There it is,” and I saw cut into the wall the words “Jehovah Jireh.”

“That,” he said, “is my bank ; it never breaks, never suspends, never gets empty. My children have never lacked for covering, or for food and I have no fear that they ever will.”

That day was one of the memorable days of my life. I saw Mr. Spurgeon at his best ; I saw the order and the precision with which that vast charity was conducted. I saw the almost adoring reverence with which everybody treated him. I had him tell me of how the work was done, how well the boys and girls turned out, and how he baptized scores and hundreds of them, and how almost every day letters full of gratitude, and telling of useful and happy lives were pouring in upon him. I caught, that day in some little measure, a glimpse of what a Chris-

tian orphanage meant, and by a curious coincidence, almost immediately upon my return to America, I was made the official head of an orphanage whose scheme it fell upon me in quite a large part to lay, and with which ever since I have been associated. I almost told myself after it turned out as it did, that the Lord sent me to Spurgeon to learn how to do my humble part in orphanage work.

I have already referred to a Sunday dinner which Mr. Spurgeon brought me to, on the last Sunday that I was in London. I counted it a kindness which I have never been able amply to repay, to be a guest in the home of a man who was by general agreement, the most efficient helper that Spurgeon ever had in the various enterprises in which he and his people were engaged. Already this dear man had finished his course, but his home stood, and I was happy indeed to sit down with his honored widow, her three sons and her eleven daughters, to a dinner, elegant in its provision and its appointments, and unspeakably grateful to me by reason of the heavenly atmosphere which filled the home. It was an exceedingly cheerful dinner-party. The tide of talk ran very free, but it was clear as crystal and refreshing as the water of life. Spurgeon sparkled with wit, and led the laughter as the quiet jest, or the apt repartee went round.

I must be pardoned for a little prank played upon him and of which I dare to tell. Mr. Spurgeon was a vegetarian who talked; he made free to proclaim himself a vegetarian. At the table that day he occupied the seat next to the lady of the house, on her right, and I sat at his right. They had roast pheasant for dinner that day and during the progress of the meal my vagrant eye caught sight of quite a formidable slice of the pheasant's breast on Mr. Spurgeon's plate, and what was more, I saw that he was vigorous beyond his wont in his attack upon

the juicy viand. I heaved an untimely sigh and expressed dolefully enough my regret that I had to return to America.

He took the matter quite to heart, and owned to grave surprise that I spoke so slightly of my country.

I justified myself by saying that the Americans were so benighted and that I would have such a grievous task in bringing them out of darkness into the true English light.

"You shock me," he said. "What is the matter with your country?"

"The matter? Matter enough indeed. Why, they have not even found out in America,—they do not really know that *a pheasant is a vegetable*."

He broke into good-natured laughter, and after a pause he said: "Blame me not; the woman, she gave it to me."

"Yes," said the lady of the house, "and you did not fail to observe that the man, he did eat."

Mr. Spurgeon engaged to meet me at his college one afternoon. It was the day on which he was to lecture and I went hoping to hear him speak to the students. Upon my arrival I found a note from him in which he said that his old enemy, "the rheumatic gout," had him in hand and that he was unable to leave his bed. He begged that I would make "a long address" to the boys, and truly I never had a happier time with a body of students than was mine that afternoon.

These are but samples of lovely delicious days that I had with Spurgeon. I heard him preach about a dozen sermons, was often on the pulpit with him, spoke for him again and again and learned to feel what a simple, transparent, pure-hearted man he was. His love of God was his life; his work for humanity was his happiness and his heart was full of light. Some time after my return to America he wrote me a letter which I accounted the most precious, valuable and honorable script that I had

among the papers which constituted my treasures. In it he gave me thanks for the good which he said he got out of me, asked me to return to London some time and be a guest in his family and seal a friendship which he was kind enough to say he was anxious should take on new strength and abide to the end. I told him I would come; it made me proud that he wanted me and I felt that I would gladly cross the sea if I could put even a little cheer into his overtaxed and often aching heart.

But it was not to be. Soon the news of his death came and after that I had little heart for seeing London again. Then came the burning of my church and its flames consumed his letters and other tokens of kindness which he had bestowed upon me. Nothing was left of it all except the assured hope that I shall see him in the morning and know him better than I could ever have known him here.

XVII

WORK IN COLLEGES AND IN THE EDITORIAL CHAIR

I CAN recall no part of my career as a minister that has been more interesting or fruitful than what it has been my privilege to do in colleges and universities. Not that I have in any sense made that a special feature, for during the bulk of my life it was only on rare occasions that I could snatch an opportunity of visiting these institutions of learning, sometimes for addresses, courses of lectures or more distinctly for evangelistic services. Wake Forest College, of North Carolina, has always been to me a school which commanded my heart and enlisted my energies. It would be hard to tell how many times I have gone to this school within the last forty years. It has always had a peculiarly reverential spirit. Wingate, Pritchard, Charles E. Taylor, my old college mate, and W. L. Poteat have all been men whom I have revered and ardently cherished and my work was done under their several presidential administrations. They have had associated with them all the time not only men of accurate, strong scholarship, but of devout and active piety.

In the first revival meeting held at Wake Forest there was one young man who did not disguise in the least his antagonism ; his unbelief was outspoken and his magnetism drew around him quite a number of sympathizers. He was looked upon as a grave menace to the progress and effectiveness of the meeting. I could not regard him

in that light. He struck me as one doubtful of his own ground and anxious to disguise his own convictions. The meeting closed, however, leaving him uncommitted, and while I did not keep in communication with him I thought of him constantly as one who had in him convictions in favor of religion which he would never be able to destroy. It was no surprise to me to receive four years later a letter announcing his decision to unite with the church and saying that he dated his change back to the meeting at Wake Forest. He is now one of the most influential Christian men in North Carolina, full of righteous leadership, honest to the core and honored by the best people in his state. It seems that in the case of young men of high spirit, stubborn will and wild ambitions, they always find it hard to submit to Christ and surrender only after long battles.

We must not despair of young men who are hard to convert, for when they are converted you may look out for them at the front in after times.

During that same meeting a young lady came to see me one afternoon at the president's home and asked for a private interview with me. She was not connected with the college in any way but lived several miles away in the country. I saw at once that she was sorely troubled and yet reluctant to reveal the burden which she felt unable longer to bear. I drew her along by quiet stages until she was bold enough to tell me her story.

"I was converted," she said, "when I was twelve years of age, and from that time I felt that my life must be absolutely devoted to Christ and that I must allow nothing to cross my way that could possibly divide my affections or my service. My parents knew of my conviction and approved it. They gave me the advantages of the best schools, and when I finished my school career I decided that if the Lord did not direct me otherwise

I would go to the foreign field, and up to that time I had scarcely known a momentary waver in my purpose.

"Some months ago there came into my life a new appeal and I must tell you frankly that it was novel and mighty. There came before me a new claimant for my heart and I must do him the justice to say that he was loyal, honorable and worthy of any woman's affection. He opened before me a career so alluring that my purpose has been quaking, for I am sure that if I were to link my fate with his I would make him unhappy unless I should go with him in his plans, his methods of living and his views of life.

"Now," she said, "I stand at the parting of the ways and I find that a spirit of hesitancy possesses me. I bring my case to you and ask for frank dealing at your hands."

I confess that I was moved out of all my composure by the strain and pathos of her story. It was the sight of a great soul in a supreme conflict. Of course I took time and dropped soothing words as the moments went by. But at the last I told her it was one of those personal, untransferable things in which no stranger and even no friend could intermeddle. We prayed together and parted without my once telling her to dismiss her lover.

The meeting went on for days, and one night it ended. Friends lingered in the hall after the great crowd had gone out, for pleasant chat, and to say their kindly farewells before I went to the train that was to take me away. As I went down the aisle in leaving the hall some one touched me and drew me around. It was the young woman with the battle on hand. Her face was radiant,—I had almost said heavenly,—and as she took my hand she said, "I would have you know before you go; I have conquered in the battle at the Cross," and we parted.

Less than two years ago I was at a great country

gathering and she came up and made herself known to me as the wife of one of the most gifted young ministers in the South, and I found that she was at the head of the missionary movements of the women of her denomination in her adopted state. Her life is the wonder and joy of her associates and all because of her undivided loyalty to Christ.

In the nineties I went to Denison University in Ohio to preach the baccalaureate sermon. My visit was under extraordinary pressure, I reaching there late and leaving hastily to meet other engagements, and I easily recall with what a sorrowful sense of failure I bade adieu to the place as one that I would gladly forget and one that would be glad to forget me.

Sometimes, however, the aftermaths of a preacher's performances come in as providential comforters. A few months after my visit to the university I received an invitation to come during the ensuing winter and conduct evangelistic services. These were held in January, 1896, and were marked by many surprising and thrilling incidents.

Candor constrains me to say that I never had a more depressing beginning. A spiritual numbness, almost arctic in its chill, possessed the town and the school, and I readily admit that a part of the spiritual torpor seized me and it looked like the case of a pithless and pointless preacher feebly descanting on the resurrection to an apathetic and unresponsive people. For nearly a week I beat the air without a convert, without a tear and with nature's thermometer at about fifteen below zero and the thermometer of grace a good deal lower. I almost believe that I would have been requested to leave if there had been enough vitality in the meeting to organize public sentiment on that point. After I had been there

from Tuesday until Sunday night I ended my sermon with a statement about like this: "I have been here hammering away upon you for nearly a week and I have not seen a spark fly nor a single sign that any arrow from my quiver has entered any soul. If you have cared for my preaching you have not said it, and if you care for the salvation of the lost you have adroitly concealed your feelings. There seems to be no spiritual relation between you and me, and I have reached the point where I want to find out something. I am coming down out of this lofty pulpit and take my stand on the floor, and if any of you have a living interest in these meetings, if any of you are crying after a better life, if any of you are burdened for the salvation of the lost, and if any of you wish this meeting to go on I ask you to come up and give me your hand. I will give you five minutes to come or not to come, and if you do not come then I will have something else to say to you."

Then I went down and there I stood ; I did not look at my watch but it was a momentarily long time, and I was beginning to wonder what time the train would start next morning. Then a very distinguished gentleman, very prominent in the town and a part of the university, arose quite far back in the large building and came forward, moving very slowly as if he had the burden of several centuries upon his shoulders, and gave me his hand. I told him that I was very happy to see him and that I would remember him to my dying day, which thing I am honestly doing. Then another ominous and appalling pause struck me. In a little while, however, a woman started and on her way her emotions overcame her, and when she reached me she was shaking under a strain which she made no effort to conceal. She was one of the choicest Christian ladies of the community and there was a resistless contagion in her feeling. It called

out the timid and half-conscious struggles of unnumbered souls and it would not be too much to say that within the next few minutes 300 people came and there were few faces that were not bedewed with tears.

When the tide went out I announced that the meeting would go on and asked for a hymn and also for confessions of Christ. The response was six men and one boy. A week later the meeting ended and so far as could be known there were about 250 conversions. Hundreds of people attended daily from outside of the town and of course school and town poured their contents into the great meeting at every service. My attention was called, by some of the university boys, to one of their number who was quite a brilliant and defiant atheist by profession. I dined one day at the chapter house where he ate his meals and got my first sight of him. He was almost big enough to constitute an agnostic club all to himself. I ventured to speak to him one day, —at least as much of him as I could get in the neighborhood of, and the scornful growl which he let fly at me almost took my breath. He disposed of me by saying, "You must know, sir, that all men do not see alike, and I see nothing in the doctrine of a God." I told him rather tremulously, big as he was, that after all there might be space enough in the universe for God to get standing room, and we parted at that.

We had inquirers' meetings and one day there were many present and among them was my colossal atheist. I began by inquiring the names of the different persons present and asking them a question or two with the view of a brief address and a prayer.

When I came to the giant I expressed surprise to see him and he instantly put on the war paint. "I ought not to have come," he said harshly ; "the boys persuaded me in to it."

"The boys made a mistake," I said, "and I will pause a moment to give you time to leave."

He winced evidently.

"Before I go, sir," he said haughtily, "will you kindly tell me why you believe in the existence of a God?"

"No, I will not," I replied, "but I will ask you some questions. The president of your university has written a book on Christian Theism. Have you studied it?"

"No, I have not," he replied.

"There is a book," I continued, "called the Bible, which claims to come from God; have you read that?"

"No, sir, I have never read it," he said rather sullenly.

"Evidently you are not seeking light as to the existence of God," I said with decision, "and I am surrounded by those who are inquiring the way to God. If I had three days and nothing to do, I might possibly give you some of the reasons why I believe in God, but under my present condition and in your present mental mood I have no time to give you and I request you to retire."

It was strong medicine, and he revolted from it, being manifestly anxious for a wrangle. Just as he was rising to his feet to go out, a thing occurred so touching, so beautiful, and so full of spiritual power, that I almost thought it must be the voice of God. A young man sprang to his feet, truly one of the most handsome specimens of the genus homo that I ever looked upon, and bursting into tears, he said, "Dr. Hatcher, I believe in God, but I am so sinful and blind that I cannot find my way to Him and I am afraid that He will never let me come to Him."

"Sit down, my dear boy," I said, moved to tears by his pathetic speech; "I can help you. Wait till this

young man gets out and I'll show you the path that leads to God."

It was a striking scene. One young man turning his back upon God ; the other trying to find Him.

I saw nothing more of the atheistic giant until the last night of the meeting. My last message had been delivered and I asked for public confessions of Christian faith. I saw some one rise near the door and start forward. As he came into full view I discovered that it was none other than my obstreperous atheist, and walking over to his side of the house, I said to him as he drew near, "Hello ; it looks as if you have discovered that there is a God."

Choked with emotion he replied, " Yes, I have found that there is a God and I have come forth to declare my faith and to give Him my life." I never saw him afterwards, but the university offered special advantages to a young Virginia boy in whom I was interested, and that boy, during one of his vacations, canvassed in Michigan for books to help him out in his hard pull for an education. During the summer he wrote me a letter and told me that he and my ex-atheist were working together, and that he accounted him the most devout and godly young man within the range of his acquaintance.

During the progress of this same meeting, President Purinton came from the chapel and calling me into his office said to me that he had a renewed faith in God, and said it in a manner which told plainly enough that he had a new experience ; and so I asked him to tell me how it happened.

There was a young man in the university in his senior year who was from Cincinnati,—very gifted, very irreligious and dangerously magnetic. The president said that he had been uneasy about that young man's influence ever since he came to the university ; not that he was a

corrupter of morals, but that he was so fascinating in his worldliness and irreverence. He said also that he had constantly prayed for him through the four years that he had been in the school and yet at times was tempted to feel it was vain to pray.

He then told me that the young man was present at the meeting in which we had the memorable and moving hand-shake, and was greatly offended by it, even making a vow and sealing it with an oath, when passing through the vestibule in leaving the church, that he would never enter the church again. To that ill-born committal he stuck inexorably for a week, but on the night before, the president told me, a group of the godly students determined that they would call on the young scoffer in a body and seek to bring him to Christ.

He knew them well ; they were among his best friends and he well understood the reason for their coming as they did. He anticipated their appeal by ordering them out of his room and refusing sternly to hear them. They would not go and undertook to plead with him, and he finally took his chair to the corner of the room and facing the wall and cramming his fingers in his ears, he refused to hear them. His bearing was so cross and mortifying that the boys withdrew and went away to one of their rooms, gathered reinforcements, told of their experience, and determined to continue in prayer. It was a solemn meeting and with tears and agony they cried unto God ; they cried long, and with holy persistency. Suddenly the door flew open and some one fell on the floor in the midst of them. "I give up, boys," said the young man, "I can stand it no longer ; that was my despairing struggle down in my room. I fought it as long as I could, but I want you all to pray for me that God will receive me and make me His servant."

This was the story told by President Purinton and it

was with an alert and buoyant step the young man came out at the next service of our meeting and took his stand for Christ.

Five or six years after that I was returning to Virginia from the West, and left the train at Clifton Forge. Suddenly a young man rushed out of the sleeper, sprang to the ground, and seized my hand. It was indeed a most rapturous greeting, and I wondered who on earth it could be who was overpowering me with his demonstrations.

"You don't know me?" he asked. "Why, I am Wiltsier, the Cincinnati boy who tried so hard not to become a Christian during that revival at Denison, but failed so gloriously in my resistance."

"Are you still at it?" I asked.

"Sure, doctor; ever at it and at it forever."

As this is somewhat of an Ohio chapter, I might add one or two other incidents which occurred in meetings held in the Buckeye State.

An incidental result of my work at Denison was an invitation to the Ashland Avenue Church, Toledo. There I had an experience quite different and yet about as acute as was the depressing start in the meeting in Granville, the seat of the Denison University. For nearly a week the Toledo meeting was thinly attended and conspicuous in nothing except in the multitude of empty pews and the absence of men. The situation hit me in the centre, and I became desperate.

"I am going home to-morrow," I said gloomily one morning to Dr. Emory Hunt, the pastor of the Ashland Avenue Church. "The men have ignominiously deserted us, and while women are better than men, there never was a great revival unless there were sympathetic men to lead it." He made scant reply but I heard him telephoning in the hall soon afterwards.

Presently one of his true men, a man converted not very long before, and who had been at every service of the meeting, walked in and Hunt asked me to repeat what I had said to him about returning to Virginia. I did it as tersely as possible.

The brother's name was Dow. He listened in silence and admitted the justice of my complaint. He was profoundly affected, and finally told us that if his carriage and his telephone had any influence he would give me some men to talk to that night. The night came, but I could not see the men and thought that his carriage and his 'phone were not effective as evangelistic agencies.

At the close of the meeting that night, however, I was invited into one of the large rooms of the great church building. There were the men and I was told that the freedom of the occasion was mine, and I used it, not as abusing it, but as coming quite near to the point of abusing those men.

"I am here, gentlemen," I said, "not as an intruder, but on an invitation from you to help in a revival meeting. Thus far the meeting has failed because those who invited me, in a large measure, have not come, and the pastor tells me that you have pled pressure of business as your excuse. If you are too busy to have the meeting, then why not break it up? I think possibly that you stay away because you do not like to hear me preach. If that be so, I am not surprised. There are scores and tons of people where I came from who do not seem to like my preaching, and if that is the trouble tell me so, and I will go back where I live and where I have men that are willing to hear me. I would not mind your dislike one fraction as much as I do your neglect. In fact I would rather for you to get bludgeons and clubs and guns, and force me out of your town than to leave me to minister on the lifeless remains of a revival in which

you invited me to help you. Settle something to-night and tell me your conclusion."

I started to walk out but one man with ire in his eye arose and asked, "What do you want us to do?"

I told him that it would be a formidable task to write a schedule for every individual in that room, but that I thought that I could tell him what he ought to do. "Yesterday," I said to him, "your father, eighty years old, came to see me, to tell me that he was born in Culpeper, Va., and to talk with me about the land of his birth. A fine old gentleman he was and a most interesting chat we had, and when he was leaving I said to him that he was once born in Culpeper and that I would like to know whether he had ever been born again. He told me that he was still in his sins and without God in the world." I then added that I thought that the son of an old man like that, if he himself was a real hearted Christian, would have little trouble in knowing what he ought to do. Be it said to his honor that he took the hint in good part and did the work.

It was a thing never to be forgotten to see how those men piled into the room the next night, many of them bringing their families, some of them attended by their employees and yet others bringing friends and strangers as they could. The work began that night with unmistakable tokens of the power of God. The next Sunday morning was the greatest day that I ever saw in all my ministerial life. It was a grown-up people's revival. Scarcely any children made confessions but a great number of men, in many cases, men and their wives, and the bulk of the converts were married people. One gentleman, a highly reputable wholesale merchant, told his wife that morning that he would go with her to church though he had no respect for that kind of a meeting, that he would never take any public stand in religion, and that if anybody

dared to speak to him that morning, he would walk out of the church and never enter it again. While the people were going forward that morning a friend passed up the aisle near this gentleman, and, pausing, said, "Clarence, have you heard the call this morning which comes to you from God?"

"Yes, Julius, I have heard, and wait; I want you to go with me," he replied, and both of his solemn vows got smashed up that day to the glory of God and to his own salvation.

In the audience that morning was an avowed atheist from Detroit, who had come to church with his sister. As they walked away she said to him, "Brother, I have believed before that there was a God and on that faith I joined the church, but I never knew that there was a God so overwhelmingly as I know it now."

"Talk not to me," the man excitedly answered. "I hate the very thought of God, and would rather die than to believe that there is a God, but when that call for a confession of faith in God was made to-day I had to hold to the bench with both of my hands to keep me from going. There was a power in that meeting that I never felt before."

This meeting continued a week after the memorable service just described, and on the last Sabbath there were over sixty boys and girls converted. The last service of the meeting occurred on Sunday night and it was a distinct Christian triumph. The conversions multiplied too fast to be counted. There lived a rich, retired gentleman in a house near the church and notable because of its vast number of windows. The master of that house had a friend who lived not far away and who had no employment. They had time on their hands and much to spare and they played cards, so it was said, all day and late into the night. The gentleman in the many-win-

dowed home had one little daughter who found her way into our meeting and was gloriously saved and in a little while her mother confessed the Lord also. The father was sensibly affected, but he and his comrade in the sport held off and would not attend the meeting. On the last Sunday night each of these men decided to go to the meeting without telling the other. The auditorium was very large and the crowd overwhelming and the two men entered the church by different doors and sat far from each other, but the arrows of heaven flew far and wide that night, and each of them fell beneath the conquering power of the Cross. Calls for confession were made; the audience stood up and sang and among the many who came were these two men, and, by a curious coincidence, while coming from different directions and in utter ignorance of what the other was doing, they appeared in the presence of the ministers almost in the same second to make their confession of Christ.

It was also my delightful privilege to be associated with Dr. Henry L. Colby, of the First Baptist Church, of Dayton, Ohio, in a meeting whose strains and victories are woven into the very shreds of my life. That church is justly distinguished for its broad and abounding liberality. Excepting one other church of our denomination it is said to be the foremost church in its gifts to our missionary treasuries. I was greatly stirred by the spirit of that church as shown in our revival services. The richest and most cultivated of the people were among the foremost in their personal zeal in the matter of soul saving. I recall a beautiful girl, trained in the finest schools of the country and just home after a year of Oriental travel, who stood in the vestibule and handed a singing book to each person at each service and gave to them a word of gracious welcome as they entered the house. It seemed a simple act enough but it was the work of her

heart, her way of betokening her interest in every soul, and her device by which she hoped to save some.

Prominent in the membership of that church were a gentleman and his wife with only one child, a son grown to manhood and under the deadly fascination of the world. The anxiety of the parents played mightily upon the hearts of the people. In this great company of the anxious there was a modest Christian lady who hit upon an unusual device for bringing the young man to the meetings. She wrote him a note asking for his company to the church on a given evening. It was a thing out of the usual order; she was fully his social equal, and while naturally dreading the misinterpretation of her act, she could think of nothing better and prayerfully made the venture. At first the young man affected surprise and offense, and told his mother that he accounted it a distinct indiscretion. The mother knew well enough what it meant but she told him that if he took that view of it he ought by all means to decline her invitation. She spoke kindly of the young lady but assured her son that if he had any ground for suspicion that she had transcended the bounds of propriety he ought to break up existing relations and have no more to do with her. For the time the suggestion pleased the young man and he went off to put it into execution; but as a fact he was not acting candidly, and during the day he came back and told his mother that he ought not to have uttered such an unjust censure upon the young woman, and he withdrew it. The mother then told him that he need not go with her if he felt unwilling to do so and that he could decline in a way that could not be offensive to her.

That pleased him wonderfully and he retired to send her a note. The note did not go, however, and he came back again and said that he did not have any good reason

for not going with her except that he did not wish to attend the meeting. His mother suggested that he might take her to the door and call for her at the end of the service and he jumped at that suggestion and decided to act upon it. Just before he left the house to go after the young woman, he dropped in to say to his mother that he had decided after all that he had better not emphasize his aversion to the meeting by refusing to enter the church, and so he had determined to go in. At the close of the meeting the young lady brought him up and introduced him to me. I knew nothing of the case but read in his manner the traces of his embarrassment, and so we passed a few genial and friendly words without any appeal to him in favor of the Gospel.

On the following evening at the close of my sermon I asked for open confession of Christ and had the pleasant surprise of greeting among others this young man. His embarrassment was now all gone and he said that after the young lady went forward with him the night before to meet me it gave him some sense of what it meant to take a stand for Christ. That young woman tried a bold expedient, but it was all for her Redeemer's honor and she won a rare victory.

Think of that mother also. She had that preëminent sense of knowing how to handle a capricious and tempted son. When a woman is wise what a wise woman she is.

While I cannot even mention the names of the various colleges and universities in which I have labored, I must mention briefly several other schools.

Franklin College at Franklin, Indiana, has been an institution of learning with powerful attractions to me, under the presidency of E. B. Bryan, LL. D., one of the most accomplished and interesting men in our American Republic. He distinguished himself in educational work in the Philippines, and then came home to add lustre to

Franklin College by his efficient administration. I was there several times and witnessed most signal proofs of the value of proper college government as a means of promoting evangelical religion among the student body. Glorious revivals I witnessed there, and felt that under President Bryan and Rev. P. L. Powell, D. D., it was indeed a charming task to preach the Gospel in a college town in which the citizens and the college took harmonious part, and shared equally in the showers of grace which fell from heaven. It was a sight indeed to see the college president grappling the business men of the community, and by tactful grace leading many of them into the service of God.

I cannot forget a notable revival in Hamilton, New York, the seat of Colgate University. It must be frankly said that the atmosphere of the community was impregnated dangerously with the spirit of Unitarianism and Universalism, and I found the difficulties in the way of our work obstinate and formidable indeed, but there were noble people there, those who believed in the saving blood of the Redeemer, who cried mightily to God for saving power, and who during the long wait never wavered. I can never forget Dr. Arthur Jones of the university, who was the vanguard of the evangelical hosts. He it was who planned a prayer-meeting in the grand stand on the athletic grounds, a movement which some openly despised, and even many of the devout looked upon with misgiving, and I fear I was among them; but Dr. Jones was unyielding. He said we ought to have that meeting; he planned for it, and insisted on it. It looked as if all motives conspired to make the people come, and especially the university students, who were hard to reach. The stand overflowed, many driven into it from the playgrounds by a rain, which came just at the moment of meeting, and from the

first song that was struck the power of God filled the place. The feeling was something unworldly and irresistible, and from that time the tide changed, and when the meetings closed a little while after scores and scores had been converted.

I wish to say that while I never spoke of Universalism, or any of its kindred heresies, I put up against it the plain, uncompromised Gospel as found in the New Testament. I presented Jesus Christ as the Son of God, as the sacrifice for sin, as the King in Zion and the Bible as the word of God, and on that rested the issue. Oh, it was wonderful. I tremble as I think of it now. I never undertake to count converts, but on the last night of the meeting a mathematical brother kept tally of the conversions, and reported that there were 130 of them.

We need not be uneasy about the old Gospel ; that is all right, and just as mighty now as on the day of Pentecost. It is always adaptable to present conditions, without any change in its doctrines or its terms. And if those who harbor secret sympathy with the new doctrines and frigidly preach the old Gospel with frills of the new theology pinned on to cover up the signs of blood would stop their foolishness and tell the story of Calvary, they could help us mightily in bringing the salvation of the world.

I went to a school in the South several years ago for revival service, in the midst of the baseball season. Some of the sincerely, but narrowly devout, were drooping with despondency about the meeting, because the baseball team had four match games for the week during which the meeting was to occur, two, away from home and two at home, and it was actually discussed as an evil that ought to be broken up. My reply was, "Not at all ; let the boys play their games, and let us ask God to use those strapping giants for His glory during the meet-

ing." The boys came home and played their first match on their own grounds on Thursday afternoon, and whipped their antagonists gloriously, and that night the captain of the team and two others whipped the devil yet more gloriously, and came out for Christ. Up to the closing meeting Sunday night every member of the team had been converted but one. The next morning just as the train on which I was leaving began to move, a brawny, handsome fellow sprang into the car and seized my hand.

"My name is Cunningham," he said, "one of the baseball boys; the only one left out; I thought you would want to know, and so I ran in to tell you that I am in also; the whole team is now lined up for Christ." Then out he sprang from the flying train, and I was thinking how greatly the Lord honored His grace by the way He handled that athletic team. Even to this day I can hardly see a hardy, determined baseball game without hoping that the Lord will get a good contingent out of the fray for His own service, later on.

It was no part of my consciousness of duty that I was ever to be an editor, but the love of composition was inherent in me. The thought that I might at some time see some production of my own pen in print burned as a flame in my soul in my youthful days. The first production ever published of my own was an obituary, and possibly no other mortal ever was so jubilant over a sombre specimen of literature as I was over that obituary. I was almost insane with delight and would probably have been hopelessly so but for the fact that I committed the grievous blunder of putting the name of Zaccheus for Zacharias in the article. That nearly fitted me for the lunatic asylum by crushing me into the dust with a sense of being an incurable fool. As that was my first article it was also my last for many a weary month.

My *cacœthes scribendi* gradually returned, though considerably chastened and cautious.

Just after entering the pastorate I wrote quite a number of character-sketches which attracted some little attention and revived my courage, which had suffered such wreck in the Zaccheus tragedy. I found myself writing for a number of newspapers in and out of Virginia but had no thought whatever of becoming an editor.

Dr. J. B. Jeter, a minister of commanding abilities and greatly distinguished for writing the purest English and that in the most winsome style, was a kinsman of mine. For many years he was the editor of the *Religious Herald* of Richmond, Va., and the paper attained an extraordinary celebrity under his magnetic touch. Some time after his death his widow, who still owned an interest in the paper, made request of my church that I might be her representative on the paper, and to this my people with characteristic generosity consented.

The bulk of the editorial work fell on me and I carried the burden in connection with the cares of my great pastorate for three years. I found duty and pleasure combined in that phase of Christian service but I could not find it possible to continue the double duty any longer, nor was I willing to quit my pastorate, and so I went out of that editorial work. Immediately I became correspondent of a number of papers in the several sections of our country and wrote almost as much as when I was editor. I became editor of the *Baltimore Baptist* also and served in that capacity for quite a number of years. Later on I became associate editor of what is now *The Baptist World* of Louisville, a noble paper with a mission distinctively its own, and with a constituency extending into every leading country of the world. Perhaps I ought to add that covering nearly all of the years of this editorial work I have been associated

with the editorial production of our Sunday-school literature in the South, working without intermission in that department of our denominational enterprises for nearly twenty years.

A sentence may also be added to the effect that in the meanwhile I had become the author of several books whose names and purposes need no mention here. It would be impossible to speak one syllable in commendation of anything that I have ever done ; for nothing that I have ever done has satisfied me and everything that I have ever done has upbraided me that I did not do it better. At the same time my heart humbles itself before the throne of the Father that even at all I have been able to use my pen in the service of my fellow men.

In ending this hasty reference to my labors as a writer, I might mention one episode in my experience which by its singularity seems worthy of remembrance. At the close of the war, Hon. Henry K. Ellyson was founding a daily newspaper in Richmond and he sent a messenger across the river to me in Manchester, where I was then pastor, bespeaking my influence in circulating the paper in the town. It was just at the end of the war and we were all miserably poor, but it chanced that I had just encumbered myself with an orphan boy, who was desperately anxious to escape from the cotton factory and to go to school, and as I had no way of providing for this, I wrote Mr. Ellyson that if he would select the boy as his carrier, I'd put the go on the paper, a proposition he promptly accepted. Thereafter, about once a week for the next year, a series of letters from Manchester appeared in the paper under the nom de plume of "Struggle." The author put herself forth as a factory girl, who got some education just before the war, but whose fortune was utterly shattered by the war, and who was reduced

to the bitter necessity of being a factory girl. As about all that appeared in the paper from Manchester was contained in these letters, and as they had a decidedly critical and audacious air, and as almost everybody in town was dead set on discovering the identity of the girl, the paper took wings and flew to a speedy prosperity. As the distinct note of the letters was dissatisfaction with factory life, a yet deeper and more scornful abhorrence of the stupidities and disorders of the town, it can readily be seen that there was trouble ahead. She claimed to send her letters to the paper and have her mail brought back by her little brother, and the bridge was watched remorselessly in order to waylay that non-existent little brother.

Let me say, however, that my little factory lad was the go-between in the matter, and he kept the secret with all the diplomatic caution of the star chamber. By degrees this writer touched up the civil authorities as to the condition of the town, got after the churches, scored the factory authorities, criticized the front yards and the unpainted houses of the people and, in short, impressed the sluggish town with the belief that there was a deadly enemy abroad in the community. She elected a new town council, had quite a number of breaks in the streets repaired, brought on several pugilistic encounters between her friends and foes, got several proposals for marriage of the most romantic order, often received free tickets to the theatres and other entertainments in Richmond, had ever so many snares set for her detection, made many of my most intimate friends furiously mad, and more than once made allusion to me and my church so pointed, so scathing and once or twice so just for that matter, that it was hard for a factory girl even after dark to walk the streets attended by her brother without the liability of being called to account.

Several months before I left the town to settle in Baltimore the correspondence ceased, and so when I departed the authorship of the letters was never known. There was one incident connected with it that was so laughable that I venture to tell it though the gentleman involved in it is still alive. He came to me one day in rather an autocratic and patronizing way and asked me if I knew Miss Struggle. My reply was that nobody up to that time had satisfactorily proved to me that the writer of those articles was a woman, though I told him that I thought some of them did suggest a woman as their author. He said in reply and with pomp befitting the occasion, that he thought he could set my mind at rest on that subject. He had studied the matter in a painstaking and a critical way, studying not the clumsy facts in the case, but the nicer shades, the unconscious hints and the atmosphere and quite a number of other things that had weight with literary critics, and that he had decided that beyond question the author was a woman. I expressed great satisfaction that he had favored me with an opinion so nearly authoritative and which I thought would have weight with people who were constantly appealing to me as to the authorship of the letters. The incident associated with those letters would make quite a volume.

After years had passed, I was crossing the bridge with a man thoughtful far beyond his station, who was an operative in the factory at the time the letters appeared. I asked him in a brusque, offhand way if the writer of those letters had ever come to be known. He said no, but that whoever the writer was, the letters had played the mischief with him, and he told me quite a story. He said that the factory people were in a perpetual wrangle over those letters and that he was one of the wranglers, and that on one occasion he repelled an attack upon the

author for some criticism made upon the management of the factory. It seems that his words went to the authorities in the main office and he was ignominiously fired,—to use his phrase,—in trying to defend that woman. For a moment I almost felt that if he would put in and thrash me for getting him into the trouble, it might have brought me to repent of having played a woman's part for a full year to the serious disturbance of belated, ill-governed old Manchester, as she was in those first post-bellum days.

XVIII

NERVE SHAKERS

ONE fruitful source of trouble to me from my childhood had been my disposition to fall in love with people. My elective affinities have been very powerful but not always discriminating. I have allowed myself to become attached to people until I actually suffered by separation from them. This was peculiarly, painfully true of me in my youth, and it is true even to the present time.

When I went out at seventeen years of age to teach school, I was thrown entirely among strangers—many of them rude in manner, limited in knowledge, weak in morals and destitute of religion, but in some way they were very gracious to me and in a little while they seemed to grow into my very life. Even those who were eccentric, unsociable, quick to anger and grossly selfish, interested me and it cut to the centre of life when I had to separate from them. My heart always insisted on keeping up its connections with them, and, though some of them perhaps soon enough forgot me, I remember almost every one of them and have had their children and their grandchildren on my hands ever since. With ever so many of their posterity I have had some part in watching and in shaping their career. I must give at least one case, which will serve the double purpose of showing how a half-forgotten tie of friendship may suddenly become an important factor in a man's conversion, and also how a most pitiable failure in preaching sometimes becomes the

human force in God's hands through which He saves those who are far away.

When I was in about my middle life, I went up to a meeting in my native county of Bedford. At that time I was not only a pastor in Richmond, but I was editor of the *Religious Herald*, and my visit was largely in the interest of that paper. They had a kindly way of always putting me up to preach whenever they caught me within the boundaries of that county, but this time I was to be there but one day and a half, and I wrung from the committee a promise that they would excuse me from giving a sermon, as I would be much absorbed with other things. When I arrived at the church the next morning, the committee collared me on the spot. Apologetically, but very firmly, they told me that several of the other ministers present had disappointed them and they felt constrained to come back on me. I saw their situation, and yet, owing, I suppose, to much unconquered badness, still existent in me, I was rather rebellious and resistant. But I never did have much stability when I came to deal with an appeal for me to preach, and so I consented—not gracefully but grudgingly. I had quite an angry spot somewhere in the invisible domain of my anatomy.

There was a preaching stand erected in a little grove, the arrangements being about as rude and inconvenient as human folly could make them. The horses and mules and hundreds of people were packed in the woods adjacent to the "Arbor," which was the name for the preaching place. The excited neighing of the horses, the discordant grumblings of the mules, the squeals of the colts, the bark of the dogs and the hum and clatter of the crowd, made the situation unbearable to me. Then, too, never in my life did I see a more apathetic or indifferent multitude of people. They sauntered in and perched themselves on the back benches, or took their stand

around, many of them chatting and laughing, some of them, disheartened by the sight of things, pulled out and left, young boys, with summer flowers around their hats and their sweethearts hanging on their arms, marched in, laughing and blinking, and then, after a few minutes, suddenly sprang up and careered away. We had no good arrangements for the singing, and I can hardly remember more languid spasms of music than those that were drawled out that day.

Truly, I was depressed to the level of despair. I felt that neither earth nor heaven cared for me, and I was not very far from feeling that I did not care much for them. I was on the verge of doubting whether I had ever been called to preach and of regretting that I had ever consented to do it. I drove the order of exercises through under whip and spur and felt thoroughly that it was a ruined occasion—one circumstantially impossible. I selected a sermon which on other occasions I had presented with satisfactory effects, but it looked to me as if it had lost every throb of its life. The words fairly hung in my teeth and what I said made me sick by the very stupidity and emptiness of my saying it. So far as I could see (I must have been almost blind with humiliation and shame), not one person seemed to be listening. I was interrupted by several dog fights and the restlessness of the babies, some of them crying to the last pitch of their lungs, and not a few people, with disgust deep written on their faces, dropped asleep or ignominiously forsook me. The only gleam of comfort I had was when I quit. As my sermon ended I struck the doxology and sang it principally as a solo, and then I struck for the conveyance which was to take me to my train.

That was the supremely misanthropic moment of my life. The temptation struggled mightily within me to commit myself by a solemn vow to heaven that I would

never put my foot on Bedford soil again. It seemed to me that it would always be impossible for me ever to meet my kith and my friends of old Bedford any more. When the train rolled up and I sprang in and we went rattling away, I felt like an escaped convict who was entering upon a flight with no thought of ever returning.

That anything could have been accomplished by that service or sermon never for one moment dawned upon my mind and for about six months every reminder of that disaster at the Old Timber Ridge Church stabbed my soul with deadly pain. But about that time a solitary ray of light, sweet as heaven itself, flashed upon me, and it came in a letter from a plain old country preacher, Rev. James A. Davis, in which he said that he had something to tell me which would probably do me good.

He said, "You will probably remember a boy that you used to know in the mountains, by the name of Henry Welch. He was then a poor boy, working with his father and, while he did not go to school to you, you knew him and he never forgot you."

He related further that this Mr. Welch was now a very prominent and prosperous farmer in the neighborhood of one of his churches and that on the Saturday before his writing, Mr. Welch gave a great surprise by coming before the church and asking for baptism, and when he was requested to give some account of his conversion he made the following statement:

"For a long time I had entirely given up going to church and really had ceased to give thought to religious things. During last summer I found it necessary one morning to ride down to the court-house to see a lawyer on a matter of business which demanded immediate attention. When I went to the lawyer's office, I was informed that he had gone down to the Strawberry Associa-

tion at the Timber Ridge Church, and so great was my anxiety to see him that I decided to drive down to the church. As I drove up into the church grounds, some one came along, crying the announcement that there would be preaching at the stand in the grove and that everybody was requested to attend. I asked who was going to preach and the reply was 'Dr. Hatcher,' and I asked, 'What Hatcher?' and they told me that it was William E. Hatcher. That was the youth that I had known in the mountains a quarter of a century before and he had never crossed my path since. More to see him than to hear him, I plodded my way to the stand and took my seat. I don't remember very much about the sermon, but I know that something in it struck my heart and put it to aching. It fretted me and I tried to wear it off, but I could never drive it out of me. It was like a nail in my foot—always there and hurting me every step I took. It has conquered me at last and brought me to humble myself before God, to seek His grace and to accept His yoke. I feel that I ought to be baptized and be an open friend of Him who has done so much for me."

It always thrills me in every nerve and tissue of my being to know that I have helped anybody into the kingdom of God, but in this case it was the unexpectedness of the thing. It seemed well-nigh incredible that even the weakest should have been touched by any arrow that flew from my bow on that miserable day at Timber Ridge; but to hear that a man, advanced in life, long hardened in wrong-doing, should have been so powerfully influenced by that sermon, did me a miracle of good. I lived on bad terms with myself for many days afterwards for having been such a fool as not to be willing to preach on that occasion, and for having been so idiotic as to imagine that men were to be converted by the power of my preaching rather than by its weakness

as energized by the power of God. I made one vow when this news came that I have not found it hard to keep, and that is, always to preach when the opportunity opens and without the slightest regard to the circumstances under which the preaching is to be done.

About fourteen years after that Timber Ridge tragedy, I was in quite a distant part of Virginia when I was introduced to a young man who seemed to be peculiarly affected by the meeting. He and his brother had just bought some property and were getting ready to open an academy, and, after he greeted me, he asked if I would be willing to go with him to the library room of the new building ; and this, though I was hurried, I readily agreed to do. There he introduced me to his brother. They both seemed to be under an unusual strain of emotion, and presently they told me that their meeting of me was what they had long desired, and that because they had something of deepest interest to them which they desired to say to me. They quite embarrassed me by their enigmatical and emotional manner of speech, but when they spoke it was to the point. They said to me that they had seen me before, when one of them was sixteen and the other fourteen. They added that it was at the Timber Ridge Church in Bedford County, Va., that they went to the stand to hear preaching and that I delivered the sermon, and that under that sermon both of them were happily converted.

After all, Timber Ridge began to take on a sacred interest and to hold for me some memories that were not born to die.

Yet later on, at a great public gathering in that county, I had the pleasant surprise of meeting Henry Welch. It was out in the great churchyard, crowded with a multitude and with the men and women talking all about. It so chanced that when Mr. Welch and myself were brought

together, there were several standing around, and when Mr. Welch expressed his joy in meeting me and spoke of his conversion at Timber Ridge, a man, who did not seem to know either of us, rushed forward.

“What is that you said about being converted under a sermon delivered by Dr. Hatcher at Timber Ridge?”

Mr. Welch, of course, repeated the fact and the man said, “Why, that same thing happened to me; I heard that sermon and it was under the impressions which it made upon me that I was brought to Christ.”

These experiences, so unlooked for, so full of reproach for me on account of my lack of zeal and of faith and yet so rich in the profits of grace, seem almost too sacred to tell; my impulses really would be to hide these precious stories in my own heart and use them to comfort and embolden me when I feel unfitted for the pulpit. They are told here, as heaven knows, in a humble and self-condemning spirit, but told that they may show that God has ordained by the weak things to confound the mighty and to magnify His power.

I ought to say outright that I have never been an evangelist; the bulk of my life has been spent in the pastorate, in my judgment the loftiest phase of the Christian ministry, but through the indulgence of my churches and sometimes, I dare say, my defiant hard-headedness, I have had the privilege of helping many pastors in their revival meetings.

Of course no man can speak indiscriminately of Christian ministers. Their differences in native gifts, culture, energy, taste and influence are so marked and varied that any general opinion expressed about the ministry must amount to comparatively little. I can say, however, that my experience with Christian ministers forbids my having the smallest sympathy with those unaffiliated,

high-straining and pessimistic preachers who are ever quick to utter their iliads of woe as to the decay of the Christian ministry. I have not found it so. No words can express my reverence and affection for Christian ministers, and I can truly say that of those with whom I have been brought in contact who have proved uncongenial and obstructive, there have been fewer than I could count on the fingers of my two hands. There have been some whose temperament, theological views and tastes have put quite a broad intermediate territory between them and me, but even in those cases where the points of disagreement were sharpest, I did not lose my confidence in their integrity nor have to use my charity in cloaking their faults.

I did have one experience that brought me a racking strain. I was invited to a very prominent and influential church to hold revival services, and that under peculiar circumstances. Some of the leading members of the church knew me, but the pastor did not. He yielded amiably to the wishes of his brethren to have me. He was a brother of great learning and of theological views so advanced that they had gotten out of sight of my doctrinal opinions. I found the atmosphere quite frosty upon my arrival, and my first meeting with the pastor, while courtly and hospitable on his part, was not notably enthusiastic, and I was dimly conscious that my first sermons signally failed to warm his heart or to draw us very closely together.

It must be frankly said, however, that his bearing towards me did not foreshadow the seriousness of an interview which came on between us later, and which I must say was rendered all the more embarrassing because we were on the way to his house at the time. He did seem to feel some sorrow that he had to say to me what he was about to say, but the sorrow was not of that pun-

gent sort that restrained him from a candor which was decidedly admirable in its courage. He told me that he had heard me in several services, and he felt constrained to tell me that my method of theological statement was not adapted to his congregation—that the old dogmatic way of stating the Gospel was effete and had lost its power, and that he could not see any outlook for the meeting.

I told him with utmost good humor that I had evidently been brought there under a misapprehension, and as he had not seen or heard me before I came, I readily acquitted him of all blame for whatever had been done. I said to him also that it would be altogether impossible for me to recast my theology or my methods of doctrinal statement, so as to fit into his meeting, and that we would have to face the question as to what ought to be done, and that I would cordially leave it to him to decide the question, assuring him that if he deemed it best for me to go away, that if my going would save him from embarrassment so far as I was concerned (meaning of course that there should be no gossip about it), then I would withdraw as soon as it could be quietly done.

He left it to me, evidently supposing that I would bow myself out. The outlook of the meeting was not favorable except that the congregations were growing rapidly, and when I got away from my candid and frigid brother, I fell back on my old theology and concluded that I would talk with the Lord about it, and I was old-fashioned enough to tell my Divine Master that I was in a predicament. I told Him that the Gospel that I had been preaching had worked moderately well where I had gone along, and that I would be wonderfully glad to try it right there—indeed, to put it on its mettle and see whether it had lost its power, telling Him of course that if it was His will that I should beat a retreat, to sound His trumpet

and I would take to my heels. I preached about three nights afterwards, and determined to make a test of the congregation. I told them that there had been no fruits during the meeting, and no special responsiveness so far as I could see, and if there was none I wanted to know it. I would come down out of the pulpit and ask those who felt a living sympathy with my ministrations and with the meeting to walk up and tell me so. It brought an almost eternal pause, but presently they began to come, and they came by the hundred, and at the end of the hand-shake I called for confessions of Christ, and a number of men came. It is due to the pastor to say that he sat on the front bench about six feet from me and made no response to my invitation, neither before nor after the benediction. I think that he was rarely on the pulpit when I preached. We had an inquirers' meeting every day, and before the meeting closed there were hundreds of inquirers, but he never attended the meetings. We had also an afternoon prayer-meeting which if I remember aright he attended occasionally, and when I left I recall no word of approval or good-bye which was uttered by the pastor. I can say with all truth that I harbored no resentment against the pastor. I believed that we were so far apart intellectually and temperamentally that he was thoroughly sincere, and besides I was so inexpressibly thankful to the Lord that He did not have quite so mean an opinion of me as the pastor did, I walked the mountain tops. I am not sure that I ever had such strength and bliss as that meeting brought me, though I think I might have enjoyed it a fraction more if there had been just a few others who knew what had passed between the pastor and myself. Let me add that some time afterwards I went back and preached a plain, old-time experimental sermon at the same place and in the hearing of the pastor, and after it was over he came and said some

of the most gracious things about the sermon, expressing his assured belief that it would be of great service to the people. Then, perhaps a dozen years afterwards, I preached again in his presence and preached with little change in my doctrinal standpoint or in my method of expression, and at that time also he was kind enough to say some things which I think I would not characterize favorably enough by calling them compliments.

I think we got closer together through the lapsing years. His candor did me actual good, though I could hardly imagine that my simple preaching could have had much in it to enrich his lofty and scholarly life. Possibly our paths, as they were coming nearer to the eternal world, were getting closer together, and closer to the Redeemer, and in those good ways bringing us closer to each other.

In my early ministry I was invited to assist quite a distinguished country pastor in a revival meeting. He was a Christian by grace and an autocrat by blood. He was an ecclesiastical satrap in his part of the kingdom, a man of decided strength, an old-time theologian, and had little respect for any preaching that did not take up solidly some cardinal doctrine and hammer it until the sparks flew. The meeting began on Sunday morning, the house was large and the congregation overflowing, and I, a lightweight at best, preached two sermons that evidently went well with the simple and untheological people. That evening he took me home with him, and we had scarcely driven out of the churchyard before he gave me to understand that my preaching was not according to his taste; it lacked body, doctrinal vigor, and was not sufficiently instructive. His candor was decidedly caustic, and I felt a faintness somewhere in the neighborhood of my vitalities. I rallied presently and commenced telling him that his fame as a theologian and his power as a doctrinal

teacher had reached me quite a while ago ; that I knew that I could not equal him in his own department, and that I had decided to let my preaching run along hortatory and persuasive lines. That quieted him, and I flattered myself that I had disposed of him in a very sagacious and effective fashion.

Before the meeting was over it broke very fully upon me, and under conditions never to be forgotten, that his opinion of my performance was in no way modified. A fine old gentleman of the neighborhood, with a magnificent home and proud of his hospitality, invited quite a number of ministers who were attending the meeting to spend the night at his house. When bedtime came, the pastor and a modest and lovely neighboring pastor and myself were put in the same room. There was a bed of good standing and a pallet on the floor. The authority of the lordly pastor decreed that he and I were to occupy the bed and the brother of low degree was to betake himself to the pallet. In due season things were quiet and, if I was not sleeping the sleep of the great or the just, I was doing full time on the sleep of the fatigued. Suddenly I was awakened by finding the pastor clambering over my knees in rather a pitiless way and with the evident intention of leaving the bed. I was partially awakened but my tongue did not wake up. To my surprise my critical master turned in with the brother on the floor. Why, I did not know, but I was not unwilling. Gradually by means of nudges and calls he wakened the hero of the pallet and they fell into a subdued conversation—that is, the good pastor fell to talking and the other brother lay listening. The conversation circled around until finally there was a pause—rather a long one—and then I heard him ask, “How do you like the preacher?” At once my ears pricked up ; things were getting interesting ; the topic was one that I had not

often heard discussed, and so all my ears went on duty. This plain man of God of the rural charge was no critic and loved everybody and kept his feelings in reach of any touch the Gospel might have for them. The meeting had assumed great proportions, and numbers were converted every day, and this unthinking brother was stupid enough to think that the preacher under discussion almost amounted to a wonder. He broke into a flood of commendation and praise of the young preacher—all of which I heard, but with what feeling I heard it, is not to be told at this point. When he finished, as he felt sure that he was pleasing his illustrious ministerial friend at his side, he asked him in great eagerness how he liked the preacher. There was a long silence—a silence so freezing that it could produce icicles in August. Presently and in stumbling and regretful tones he announced his sore and bitter disappointment. He did say that the young man seemed to be good and to mean well but he was a pitiable failure as a preacher and he seemed almost ready to repeat by memory some of the leading lamentations of Jeremiah.

I was there, at least what was left of the wreck, and very much embarrassed. I had not intended to hear the conversation, and I felt that it would not be best to let it be known that I was taking it in as it came, and so I remained silent. To the modest preacher who, in the frailty of his judgment, had made the mistake of exalting me to honors of which I was so unworthy, it seemed well-nigh a sin against light and knowledge to disagree with his strong and regnant critic, but he was not utterly routed. He made a faint response in which he patched up his argument and supported his judgment by quoting some quite eulogistic remarks that had been uttered in my honor by men of note. To this there was a short, incisive reply.

“I would not injure the young fellow and he may improve later on,” he said, and then he brought up several men by no means noted for pulpit power and mournfully decreed that I was not to be mentioned the same day in comparison with them. If I judge myself aright, I was not in the least angry or resentful under the pitiless fusillade under which I had been compelled to lie at three o’clock in the morning. Indeed, I was painfully sensible that there was a strain of justice in what he said and that restrained me. I did myself the kindness to take another nap and the next morning I told a good friend about it and asked if it would not be better for me, in the interest of the meeting, quietly and courteously to withdraw, but he told me that the meeting was to close at the end of two more days and strongly urged me to remain. This I did and was unspeakably grateful that at the close of the meeting, which lasted six days, I saw the pastor baptize forty-two converts.

I left on Saturday morning and travelled forty miles in a buggy, harboring in my bosom as I went a rather resentful conviction that, whatever the pastor might think of my preaching, it was hardly worth while for him to wake up people at three o’clock in the morning in order to convince them that I could not preach, and I must add that on that return home in that long ride in the old country buggy I had one of the most desperate chills that ever shook a languid and attenuated frame, but whether that chill was a contribution to my system from that malarial section, or whether it was attributable to the downfall of my ministerial reputation, I never undertook to decide.

Several years afterwards I wrote an article for our denominational paper on “Elder Grudge” and set him up as a man with an acrid taste in his mouth, as usually out of joint with the bent and wish of his people and as a

little crooked in his criticisms of his weaker brethren. I gave a distinct account of that same revival and had myself come into the scene as Rev. Mr. Simplex, who helped Elder Grudge in his meeting and heard the conversation on the pallet. I was living out of Virginia at that time, and it did not occur to me that the story under its new dress would be recognized. Several years still later on, I met at one of our denominational conventions the brother who occupied the pallet, and who had made the grievous mistake of telling the wrong man that I could preach. He was overwhelmed with embarrassment; he broke out in a tempest of apologies and expressed the utmost surprise that I spoke to him at all. In his confusion he asked me if I would go apart and hear him for a minute or two, for we were in a large room where there was a crowd of chattering ministers. When we had gotten into a quiet corner, he again overwhelmed me with apologies, but I assured him that he had said nothing that I could possibly be offended at, and that I would not have been offended if he had uttered a different opinion as to my ministerial capabilities. That did not satisfy him in the least. He said that through all the years that had passed, he had constantly accused himself of being unmanly and unbrotherly towards me, because he did not resent in an outspoken way what he regarded as an unwarranted attack upon me. I blew his sorrows away with assurances of good will and favor, and in time restored him to his wonted serenity and content.

Just then another minister walked up and marched into the conversation. I finally demanded to know of the brother as to how he found out that I heard the conversation that night on the pallet. The question brought something like relief. The new arrival on the scene, himself a devout and lovely minister, said that a few days after the pallet incident Brother D——, the occu-

pant of the pallet that night, came over to his house and told him what took place and expressed unspeakable regret that it had occurred. He said also that two or three years after that, when the article about Brother Grudge appeared, he read it and, putting the paper in his pocket, he mounted his horse and rode over to see Brother D—— and said to him, "He knows all about it; he has got it right here in the paper." All of us had a free laugh. Before we parted we were on the best of terms and I found that Brother D—— had suffered far more from the incident than I had, and was glad to find me in a happy mood.

Years afterwards I got on a train one afternoon, going to a meeting in the country, and when I entered the car and was taking my seat, I was greatly surprised to recognize my satrapic critic just in the seat behind mine. He dealt me a bow at long range and shrank into retirement. When I left the train where I expected to be met, it was cloudy and raining; it was sundown and gloomy, and there was not a mortal there to meet me, and not a house whose door I could hope would be open to me. To my surprise my satrap of pallet fame got off the train when I did, and evidently enough he was not met and there was nobody there to take charge of him. He did some of the most solitary and despondent walking up and down the track that I ever witnessed, and the grim apprehension cut into me that possibly he and I might have a night together, fighting mosquitoes, inhaling malaria, without supper, and with vast moral, social and psychological distances between us. About that time there came a man to the station who knew me and he overwhelmed me with kindness. I told him my story and he said, "I will get a hand-car and deliver you just exactly where you want to go." It did seem as if the Lord knew how to look after His simpletons, of which I

felt about that time that I was chief. While the friend was bringing up the hand-car, I took a rather triumphant look at the grim figure, strolling up and down the track. He was composed principally of skin and bones, and I was bad enough to wonder if I might not play a joke on the mosquitoes of that swamp by leaving my haughty and critical brother for them to work on. There was something in me that was in favor of it, but when my loyal friend rattled up on his car, I told him of the other man and he said we could crowd him in. By this time one of the darkest nights was upon us. I stepped down the track, told my critic of the good fortune that had befallen me and invited him to share it and he accepted. We sat very close together and I liked the contact. My somewhat crippled admiration for him plucked up new life, and we chatted of many things of interest to each of us. I took him into a home all ablaze with light, filled with friends as dear as life to me, and introduced him as one of the Lord's chieftains. They treated him well. The evening went gloriously, with happy talk about the kingdom of God, with song and prayer and abounding hospitality. It looked to me as if the floods had washed out bad memories and that the tie that bound was more blessed than it had ever been before.

While I was pastor in Richmond, the Culpeper church in Virginia, situated in a town of possibly two thousand people, made a request of my church to send me to their relief for ten days. They reported that their religious condition was deplorably low and that vice and immorality were rampant in their community. To this request my people responded favorably, and I went. The spirit of the people which prompted the request was in good part a preparation for a great revival. I found upon arrival that in an extraordinary degree the social and

business conditions of the town were in strong array against the meeting. We began with small congregations, were discouraged by appalling religious apathy in all the churches and all ungodliness was in open rebellion. One peculiar phase of antagonism was the organization of what came to be known as "The Devil's Revival." It had its place of meeting in the back room of a prominent store and numbered among its supporters some leading business men, including a prominent physician, a popular merchant and others equally conspicuous and aggressive. They all came to the meetings at every evening service, and their exercises followed close on the heels of the services at the church and consisted as nearly as possible in a repetition of everything that the Christian people had done. They sang the same hymns, prayed the same prayers and preached the same sermons, so far as they were able to do so. The talent of this irreverent mischief was very decided, and it was said to have been exceedingly laughable and entertaining. The Christian people were posted as to what was going on, but they were not only ardent believers in religious freedom but in irreligious freedom, so far as it operated within the lines of law.

The meeting went at a drag speed for a while, but one night the foremost citizen of the town made a public profession of his Christian faith. It came almost with the force of a cyclone, and the following night the two leaders of the services at the store made an open profession of their faith.

One of the most effective features of this rival meeting had been its choice and beautiful singing, one of its leaders being a soloist of extraordinary magnetism and popularity, and he was one of our converts. The day after his conversion I sent him a message that I was anxious to see him about a matter of great importance.

He came promptly but with many misgivings lest I had in store for him some withering rebukes for past misdemeanors. Instead, I told him that I had sent for him to request that he would come into our choir and that I would expect him to respond with a solo whenever I called upon him. He recoiled from the task, protested his utter unworthiness and declared that he knew no solos except those that he had sung in the other meeting. I told him that they were the ones that I especially desired. That night he stood on the pulpit and sang, "Almost Persuaded." His manner was modest, his voice tremulous but exceedingly tender ; every word was distinctly heard and the echoes of that song went far and wide. In all my ministry I never witnessed a meeting whose power was more profound, whose fruit was richer or whose influence was more abiding.

During that meeting a trial for murder was in progress in the court-house, and the judge gave the jury the privilege of attending the services at night. The very deepest interest was manifested in the meeting by the jurors, and several of them with the sheriff who had them in charge were among the converts.

At the close of the meeting the rector of the Episcopal church unexpectedly arose in the rear of the building and expressed gratitude for the meeting ; said that he believed that one-half of the membership of his church had been savingly converted under the influence of that revival. It was intimated to me, however, that possibly the unconverted half made it so uncomfortable for the enthusiastic rector that he did not abide much longer.

A touching episode in the meeting was that a gentleman arose and expressed a desire to give the facts connected with his own conversion. This he did in a simple, pictorial, whole-hearted fashion. He described every step in the processes of faith which led him to an accept-

ance of the Saviour. The building was packed with a great audience and I remarked that the religious experience just related was a jacket about big enough to fit a boy, and that if anybody had put it on I would like to see him. The audience room had galleries on three sides and up in the end of the gallery, next to the pulpit, a boy got up and through many difficulties picked his way out through the standing lines of men, and after a while, by knocking, got the front door of the church, which was blocked up with men, sufficiently opened to slip through, and came with a quiet, manly step up the aisle to the pulpit. I asked him why he had come. "What the gentleman said fits me exactly," the boy said, "and I accept of Christ as my Saviour just as he did."

"Here is one boy that the jacket fits," said I, and up came another until there were eleven boys who came. They were the sons of the prominent people of the town and the sight was so moving and the signs of emotions in the audience so strong that I dismissed the audience.

XIX

RATHER TOO PERSONAL

NATURALLY I was inclined to sarcasm but my deepest religious sentiment protested against it. I shrank from it as a thing unmanly and even immoral. Either by nature, or choice, or conviction, I was disposed to deal graciously with others in public. I felt ashamed of myself if I ever attempted to humiliate or belittle, even an antagonist, in public, and though in my early life I was sometimes guilty of it, I invariably had a bitter time with my own reflections afterwards.

But this statement needs one modification. There were many who delighted to break a lance with me in platform encounters, sometimes, I dare say, as an amusement for others and sometimes in the hope of making a spectacle of me by putting me in awkward positions. Here my instinct for retaliation always came into play. It sometimes sprang into the arena without granting me a moment for forethought. The man who hit me I hit, —not always wisely and not always wittily, though possibly I might be candid enough to say that if I had any success in public collisions with others it was in the way of repartee, and in speaking thus frankly I cannot acquit myself of an unseemly love of victory. It really seemed to me that in these unexpected passages at arms my answer was invariably born of the attack. It seemed to be waiting there for my use and hardly seemed the product of my own thought. I repress my longing to give some illustrations of this peculiar instinct of my being and feel it just to myself to mention the matter only to

say that these public adventures, unless thoroughly good-natured and without all partisan taint, ought to be avoided.

What others have chosen to call my humor has rarely been dealt with as a useful asset by myself. From fun-making as an art I have shrunk with intellectual as well as religious sensitiveness. It has always cut me to the core when solicited to amuse people by story or by speech. At the same time I have found it no easy task to exclude the playful, the comic, the hit, or the humorous from my public utterances. I do not remember that I ever premeditated laughable things for my sermons, but almost any time when my self-mastery was strong and my mind saw things in their varied relations, things would break out unexpectedly along the line of my delivery that would provoke a smile and very often audible laughter. There were some who urged me to stock my sermons with playful, amusing and ludicrous things, but my intellectual self-respect, as well as my sense of Christian propriety, always forbade it.

One thing I never could do and that is to tell a stock story. That vast accumulation of anecdotes which I met in one form or another on platform and in parlor, I never could use. And this is true of those pulpit illustrations as well. They did not fit my lips. I was always afraid that somebody had told them beforehand and in point of fact I failed when I undertook to repeat them. Indeed my preaching was grievously impoverished by my inability to use illustrations told me by others or found in newspaper or book. It was one of my humbling limitations and it reduced me almost entirely to such illustrations as I accumulated in my own experiences. There is some advantage in telling things which you saw in their occurring and of whose truthfulness you are perfectly assured. They are a part of your personality and of

course ought to be peculiarly effective, the difficulty being that it takes a long time for a man who has a great deal of public speaking to do to gather a workable supply.

THE LAST SPEAKER

I have been, with almost oppressive frequency, called to speak in mass-meetings and other public assemblages of the popular sort. It also would come to pass that almost invariably I would be made the last speaker, a difficult position, and one which at the first I dreaded. As time went on, however, and this was my fate so often, I came to feel that I was at home nowhere else except at the tail end of the occasion. The other men often played me un pitying tricks and the dissolving crowd often depressed me and sometimes hopelessly wrecked me. This necessity of dealing with the shank end of a great occasion had much to do with my supposed fondness for humoring the crowd. The thing had to be done. To come to the platform with the old people trembling their way down the aisle, and the young folks, maddened with fatigue, pulling out by the score, brought a crisis sometimes entirely beyond my control and always full of embarrassments. But I never had a story or a joke at command for the emergency. The effective things that I had done at other places could not be recalled and I had to trust to the occasion for material with which to awaken attention and make a chance for myself. As I look back to the multitudinous occasions of this sort in which I figured, I find it far easier to recall the times when things went awry with me than when they came my way and I held the field.

It seemed to me that I never wanted to make a very long speech except when I was put up to speak under a time limit. Of all restraints that has been to me the most terrifying, and instead of speeding me it has lum-

bered me up with self-consciousness and obstructed my progress. I recall a night in Washington City, at the International Conference of the Christian Alliance, which, by the way, struck me as one of the most powerful religious assemblies that I ever attended. Every section of our country was represented. All the Christian denominations were there with their distinguished spokesmen, and the temper of the meeting was exalted and delightful.

My time for speaking was on the second night; the meeting was in the Congregational church, a noble auditorium filled with an incomparably fine audience. As usual, fate put me as the last man on the programme and the theme assigned me was the religious conditions of the South, a topic not peculiarly inspiring at that time. I was simply the pastor of a fairly good church in Richmond, Va., and had no record that anybody knew about; and coming as I did, late in the evening, and having to speak only for a given number of minutes, I truly found myself voyaging on unfriendly seas and in mortal dread of being wrecked by the timekeeper before I could get into port. In my eyes my speech was crude and dull enough, and what filled me with impotence was the dread of being smitten in an untimely way.

The Hon. Wm. E. Dodge of New York, one of our noblest American Christian leaders, was presiding, and for some reasons I turned during the speech to address him and saw the hand of the timekeeper ominously lifted to give the signal for me to quit. With more of desperation than of courtesy I pointed my finger at him and said, "Touch that bell if you dare, but only at the risk of your life."

The roar of laughter which instantly shook the house was something not to be forgotten. I had said one thing at least which the vast assemblage approved. Just then,

too, as the noise subsided, I heard Mr. Dodge say, "Let the bell alone; let him go his way."

He didn't know that I heard him, but there was the music of heaven and the freedom of earth in what he said. Several of the most significant statements contained in my address were yet unmade and the new sense of liberty gave me a courage and an abandon that amounted to inspiration. It was mercy from above coming to a somewhat stranded man. I was put fully at my ease, said my say, and let off ever so many sentiments so national in their scope, so patriotic in their spirit and so,—and so,—at least I got through and the rest of it can well remain untold for all the coming forever.

On another occasion I was called to make an address in the city of Philadelphia. There were to be two other speakers, one from Boston and one from New York, and the time for the speaking was, according to my engagement, on October the third. I decided to drop into Philadelphia the evening before and get my reckonings. I did not know at what hour the speaking was to come nor the place for the meeting. I landed in the town about night-fall, went to the hotel, got my room and my supper and decided to go out for a little stroll and come back and spend the night with my ill-prepared speech, in the hope of shaping it for the next day. I was in my travelling clothes, which were decidedly worse for wear, my collar was limp and soiled, and I had only dabbled a little in a bowl of water and stroked my rebellious locks into shape for appearing in the dining-room.

Out on the street I stopped for a shine and had a season of fellowship with an old Virginia darkey who talked well as he gave me the shine. He told me I was very near to a great and notable church building, and as it was Wednesday evening I thought I might drop into a prayer-

meeting and trust to my well-established obscurity to guard me from recognition or notice. I stood out at the front and saw two or three people going into the church and concluded that I would explore for the prayer-meeting. A well-dressed man gave me a vigorous shake and led me into the auditorium and every seat of the vast building was occupied. I asked the usher what it meant and I found that it was one service of the great bi-centennial which I was to assist in celebrating on the next day. My first thought was to retreat, but I asked him what they were going to do that night and he pulled open a very elaborate schedule and said: "Have several speeches." I felt that it did not necessarily require a clean collar to sit in the rear and hear speeches, but presently he said, "The first speaker of the evening is William E. Hatcher, of Richmond, Virginia." Then my only thought was to make a dash for the tall timbers. Too late, however. Here came up the aisle the very man who had told me that my speech would come on the next day. This he did in the correspondence which led me into the engagement! "Heaven bless you, Hatcher!" he cried with such passionate fervor that he brought me to a pause. He told me that it was about time for the speaking, that the other orators were invisible to the natural eye, and that I was the redeemer of the night. I pointed to my dust-covered coat. I told him of my unfinished manuscript in my valise at the hotel and assured him that of all mortals I was the most miserable. It did no good; he heeded it not, but fairly collared me and took me into a side room, shucked off my overcoat and hat and peremptorily forced me to the platform.

They were working off a few solos and notices when the presiding officer who recognized me began to introduce me in terms so effusive and extravagant that I grew desperate, and to my temporary relief at least, the tide of

his eloquence was suddenly checked and he was told that he was introducing me at the wrong time, a statement the truthfulness of which I felt most profoundly.

It turned out that this brother was only a temporary chairman and that they had a Pittsburg congressman in training for the permanent chairmanship of the evening. In due course this distinguished citizen was brought forward and a good deal of the concrete eloquence which was about to be used in introducing me was expended upon this eminent American citizen. Meanwhile I sat there with a distinct criminal feeling, with not one of my outer garments in respectable order except my newly blacked shoes, and as the great pulpit was banked in evergreens my shoes could not testify in my favor, unless I stood on my head, and I almost felt that I would gladly assume that attitude if I could thereby obscure the rest of myself.

The congressman made a speech and somebody sang a solo and then my second introduction undertook to commence, but unluckily the congressman had mislaid the programme, and not having been previously informed even of my advent into these mortal scenes, totally forgot my name and stammered and blundered and searched his pockets and did almost everything except to introduce me. That was the time of my life. A thousand times my obscurity had hampered and humiliated me, but that night I found it pleasant to be the victim in the wreck of the schedule.

Finally, however, they got me up. I told them that after one man had given me a handsome introduction and had then been forced to take it all back and after another man who had undertaken to introduce me, being appointed so to do, had practically left me unIntroduced, and as my manuscript and my best clothes were at the hotel and as I also felt unworthy of any introduction

under the circumstances, I would make a few remarks pledging myself that if there were any gentlemen present who might feel called upon during the evening to introduce me I would cheerfully yield the floor for that purpose.

As to what I said further it is not needful to say here except to express the opinion that the comedy of errors, if not my speech, about as adequately entertained and refreshed the people as if everything had gone off with the most exact propriety.

It was my unhappy fortune to be called into many grim and gruesome experiences. I know not how many times I had to go to the courts in the interests of my stranded fellows who desired me as a witness, an intercessor, or a religious adviser.

During my life in Richmond a very interesting and promising young lawyer was given the death sentence for the murder of a young woman. The affair created an excitement which spread over the entire country and fairly convulsed Virginia. The evidence was entirely circumstantial and the public was cut into two very distinct and discordant parties. The execution did not occur for nearly two years after the murder and I was the spiritual counsellor of the young man. The correspondence which came to me for the young man, or through the young man to me, or directly to me concerning the young man, would have made a text-book for the study of human nature. Upon me fell the suspicions and, in no small degree, the aspersions of both parties, one side asserting that I knew the young man was guilty, and the other freely quoting me as a champion of his innocence. As a fact, from the time I became identified with the case, I never expressed an opinion on either side. Illustrative of the way I was handled by the public

I give an odd incident. I was holding a series of meetings in the northern Piedmont of Virginia. We had double service with a dinner coming between and spread under the great oaks of the parks surrounding the church building. One day after I had partaken of my lunch I thought I would stroll a bit to shape my thoughts for the afternoon meeting, and so I set out on a little stroll up the wooded roadway. Quite soon I found that I was followed by some one and decided to slacken my steps and let him pass; but he strode up to my side and stopped, or rather fell in with my gait. I knew him but slightly and uttered a word of greeting which brought no reply. Presently turning aggressively upon me he said with almost vindictive energy:

"I feel, sir, that I must tell you that I have hated you for five years."

With that he stopped. I confess that for a moment I was bewildered and for a while I held my tongue; but he held his, and there we were plodding along the public road side by side.

"It may be well for me to tell you," I said, turning to him with unruffled composure, "that I know several other gentlemen who are doing exactly the same thing, and I think it's probable that if you look around you could find enough persons who feel as you do about me to make up quite a respectable club."

He was slow to reply, but he finally asked me if I desired to know why it was that he had such confirmed hostility towards me.

"That depends upon circumstances," I said firmly. "If your hatred has been caused by any real or imaginary injury committed on you by myself I will be greatly obliged if you will tell me; otherwise I do not care to know."

Once more we had a prolonged silence which he broke

at last. "I hate you," he said, "because when you were the religious adviser of Thomas J. Cluverius you did not come out and declare your belief in his innocence," he said in tones positively fierce.

"Well, sir," said I, "in point of fact, I did not know whether he was innocent or guilty. He said that he was innocent; the jury, the Supreme Court and the governor declared him guilty. It was not my duty to decide the matter. And if I had been of the decided opinion that he was innocent I should not have said so. My relations with him and with the community enjoined silence, and if you hate me because of that fact, then you will have to continue to hate me," and I asked to be excused. It was fully ten years after that, that in quite another section of the country, and most unexpectedly, that man and I met face to face. He seemed almost transported to see me; shook my hand with vehement cordiality and we passed a few friendly words and parted without touching the odd and awkward interview we had had a decade before.

A friend has asked me how I got to be humorous. The question hits me in a new spot and savors of the preposterous. There does not seem to be any humor in me; it has no place in my natural endowments nor my equipments so far as I can understand. If there is anything in me that has to do with humor, it can hardly be inherent and at best is nothing more than a very limited capacity to discover the humors of outside situations. There is no enginery within me for manufacturing humor, and if it is at all proper to mention humor and me the same day, it must be because I may have a scant and unlocated gift for discovering those conjunctions in human affairs which titillate the people and call forth their laughter. This I say not at all as an expert, but as a man who does not live in sight of the humorous side of mundane affairs. By

nature I am reverential, sympathetic and very serious, and if hedged off from this comical world and from odd and blundering folk I do not know that I should ever smile again. Indeed I usually feel ashamed of myself and quiver with chagrin after I have whipped a crowd into laughter and rollicking fun.

I might be allowed to say another thing. I utterly abhor fun for fun's sake, except in dealing with children. To please them, to give them jolly surprises, to hear their ringing laughter, I have always been ready to sing a song, act a charade, play a prank or even crack a joke, but I fall out with myself utterly when I have been betrayed into exhibiting myself in a burlesquing or ludicrous way for grown up people. When I do intentionally make people laugh, it is always with a serious purpose. If I have a collection to take and my crowd is restive, unresponsive or in any way hard to handle, I may purposely bring on a laugh. Not, however, by a stock story or any old expedient laid away for such purposes, but by some playful commentary on the immediate situation.

Not long ago I was taking a collection and nothing was doing when a gaunt and vacant looking youngster pulled out of his seat near the pulpit, tramped his way down the aisle and bolted out at the door. I stopped while he was going and simply remarked that I was always glad when third and second-class people went out when I was talking, that while it put them at a disadvantage, it showed that they were of a sort that I could not entertain. It brought a little ripple of laughter and I then asked that if any second-class people felt that they were out of place and wished to leave they could go at any time they pleased and that I would halt the exercises while they were going out. There was just enough outbreking laughter to give the restless element of the congregation to understand that if they started out the

speaking would stop and the laughter begin. There was no further trouble, and my remarks, which were made for a purpose, were sensibly strengthened in their effect by the laughter of the audience.

XX

THE PET OF THE EVENING

IT comes too near my heart to speak to an uncertain public concerning my domestic life. It may be allowable to speak of a God-given home and of one of the most loyal and harmonious households. In some way I managed to build an ample home for my family in Richmond, and "608 W. Grace Street" was, during the growing years of my family, the gathering place where parents and children knew the bliss, the freedom, the blessings of a Christian household. Very soon, however, my children began to scatter; the ministry carried off my only son, marriage claimed one of my daughters, teaching and travel and special studies began to draw away the rest. Those who were away for the most of the year lived on the thought of coming home for vacation and those who were still left at home longed for recreation and quiet during the summer. It looked as if we could not be together during the winter nor in summer.

This led to the decision to build a summer home, and the place selected for that purpose was among the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, in a quiet, straggling little village known, so far as it was known at all, as Fork Union. There upon the brow of a noble hill, we put up a modest mansion with apartments for each member of the family with a view to its occupancy during the summer months. We called it Careby Hall, being moved to select that name by reason of the fact that a genealogical enthusiast of the Hatcher stock spent many months in

England in tracing the history of our ancestry. He sent me the result of his investigations, showing me that the place to which our forebears were traced bore the name of Careby. Much of the richest revenues of earthly pleasure which have come to me have met me in our country home where our summer reunions and our Christmas merrymakings with the children and the grandchildren have taken place for over a dozen years. The gates of Careby Hall were opened only at these special seasons for several years, but later on our domestic lights went out at 608 W. Grace Street and Careby Hall became the family homestead. Its gates have stood open night and day, kindred and friends have come and gone, its balmy rest has ever spread its couch for me when I have gone home from the travel, strain and toil of my old age activities.

Soon after erecting this home at Fork Union, there grew into my heart a desire to be of some substantial service to the community. The people were agricultural for the most part, intelligent above the ordinary, and full of kindness for the new neighbor, and it seemed only fitting that some little return for their abounding hospitality should be made. After some meditation my choice settled upon the thought of a school which would afford the neighborhood far better educational facilities than it had ever had.

The start of it was too modest and timid to expect the movement to be made more than an enterprise of the community. The mention of the proposition set the neighborhood afire. The wildest and most enthusiastic approval broke out in every direction, and the little school started in a rented house with one solitary teacher, —a worthy bachelor of Richmond College, and with less than twenty scholars.

The growth of the school from the start has been out of all proportion to its resources. The neighborhood could

not furnish many students, but the young people began with the second year to come in with ever-increasing numbers, until for the present session (1908-1909) the enrollment has been about two hundred. The faculty, consisting of one at first, has grown to about one dozen in number, and besides ample and comfortable boarding arrangements, the trustees have erected a building capable of housing the faculty, the administrative officers, the gun room, the library and the literary society, and also of accommodating a large number of students. The trustees are now erecting a large building, including an armory, a public hall, a skating rink, and ample room for conducting the work of the academy.

To me this school has been a gracious burden and a taxing benediction. It has brought me into contact with hundreds of the choicest young people whose lives it has been my happy portion to touch. Ministerial students have come in great numbers: the sons of ministers have been educated at small expense, and ever so many youths have worked their way in different industrial lines which have been open to them in the neighborhood. Students have come from every section of our republic and from many foreign countries, and year by year we have witnessed the conversion of many young people who have found the Saviour under the good religious influences of the academy.

Not very long after the academy started, the Department of War at Washington, after due investigation, decided to give the school a military equipment and to detail an officer as Instructor in Military Science and Tactics. The new feature has worked admirably, and the discipline, efficiency and varied benefits of the military system have given the school rare prestige and a far-reaching reputation. That the school has drawn upon every resource of my life I can truthfully say, making its exactions exceed-

ingly heavy at times. It has been the pet of my latter days, and of all the facts of its life the most comforting and delightful is that it has never yielded me one dollar of income or support. It has not all it needs, and is not all that it ought to be, nor can I tell what its future will be, but I shall leave the world thankful for the good that it has done, and for the honor which has been mine in working with the good people of the community in the establishment of the Fork Union Military Academy.

XXI

THE INCOMPARABLE JEFF

AT the western base of the Peaks of Otter in Bedford County, Virginia, lies a picturesque little valley. Sixty years ago it held a primitive, untravelled population. Its homes consisted almost entirely of log houses with rarely more than three or four rooms. Not a church had been built within its boundary, and next to nothing had been done for the education of the children. Scant note was taken of the Sabbath except as it was spent in sport, rude festivity and outright dissipation. It was the prime time for hunting, prize shooting and social visiting. The name of God was rarely heard except in levity or blasphemy.

At that time there was growing up in the neighborhood an eccentric and reckless lad, known to all, the old and young, as Jeff Cottrell. He was one of nature's notable freaks,—a character from his cradle. He shot up like a bean pole, early attaining an uncommon altitude, crooked and ill-shapen in many ways, shrivelled of face, tawny in complexion, with arms and hands almost unnaturally long, with hair dead, thin, straight and industriously neglected. He walked with a swinging, irregular gait which humped him along at surprising speed. His height was six feet, with uncounted inches added thereunto. While he did not hate work he was a huntsman by nature, with gaming as a fascination, an easy way with everybody, and neither avoided nor loved good men.

The religious element seemed to have been omitted at his making, and was to him a topic for jest. He could

not read, and did not wish to read. His nature was an absorbent, and he picked up and wonderfully retained things as he went along, and in some odd way he could utilize what he knew.

Jeff held a unique place in the neighborhood, there being no more of his sort, and his dare-devil air in the opinion of the multitude marked him for the worst doom. He knew all the roads and by-paths, could see at night as well as in the day, and feared nothing on the earth. The blast of his horn, the crack of his gun, the cry of his dogs, was a part of his reputation, and the sight of his face, so inwrought with mischief, and the ring of his laugh, made it pleasant to the people to have him pass their gates. Even those who deemed him a useless and adventurous sportsman laughed at his hunting jokes and wished him well, but possibly not one person in all the valley once dreamed that a religious thought could ever vex his brain or bring him to sobriety. There were a few godly people in that mountain vale. They built themselves a hewn log chapel, organized a weak little church and went to housekeeping in the name of the Lord. In the course of time they secured as their spiritual leader, a missionary of exceedingly light gifts and scant culture. For the bulk of his life, this modest gentleman had been a clerk in a country store and had devoted his life to weights and balances, yardsticks and scissors, and when it was reported that he was about to desert the commercial world for the ministry, the Philistines shed scores of flippant jokes at his expense, and when it was announced that "the Hollow" had selected this brother as its pastor, the Pharisaic tribes of the lowlands said that Thomas S. Sanderson would do for the denizens of that benighted region.

But be it said that this ill-trained missionary was not to be despised. He had a zeal ever aflame, and while his

sermons were without form they were not void. They were filled with the big concrete truths of the Gospel, and in spite of some grating intonations he told the gospel story with good effect. While at the mountain chapel he decided to hold a revival, and as I was in my third vacation as a college student and as the dear little evangelist was at his wit's ends for help, he asked me to take a part in his meeting. The revival was an event for the neighborhood. The simple folk poured out of the coves and hollows of the mountain and packed the little house to suffocation. The meeting shook almost every house in the neighborhood and the conversions were many.

One night the service suffered a curious and a most exciting shock. I was in the pulpit hammering away with my sermon in my crude and awkward fashion, when an interruption occurred which played shipwreck with my sermon and with the meeting. Through a little window, near the pulpit, there slowly entered a human head, thrust forward by a neck appallingly long, covered with tangled hair, and lit with two mischievous eyes. Indeed, he intruded so far that his face was plainly visible and easily recognized by the audience. It chanced that he was out on one of his nocturnal rambles, and in passing near the church he discovered the lights and without one thought as to the order and propriety of his action, he marched up and inserted himself so far as possible through the window, partly to see and partly in sheer mischief.

It was a scene not to be forgotten. Women were startled. The boys broke into ill-suppressed laughter and the tremulous collegian in the pulpit was hopelessly upset. In a very little while the head was withdrawn and the excitement gradually subsided. Not, however, until something had happened which was destined to

play an immortal part in the history of that gawky and untutored mountaineer. Into his soul a gospel arrow had entered with unerring aim and a new light arose upon the soul of Jeff Cottrell that was never to die out. At first the young man was utterly confounded. He came to the meetings, but strolled over the churchyard, indulged in loud and defiant talk, breathed maledictions upon the church, sometimes starting homeward with blasphemous vows that he would come no more, and yet always coming again, until he grew into a menace to the revival. Happily he was not rebuked nor repressed, and meanwhile his convictions deepened every hour, until he slipped into the chapel one night unobserved, and secreted himself near the door. When the call for inquirers was made, to the bewilderment of pastor and church, Jeff, the unshapen, the fun-making, the irrepressible Jeff came forward with great feeling to the front bench. I can never forget his weird form, his jangling stride and his awkward and sorrowful look. The crowd fairly gasped with amazement and yet it was quickly seen that the frivolous and jovial spirit had gone out of him and a new passion had mastered him. In a sense his coming out brought trouble. His ignorance of the Gospel was fearful ; he could give no account of himself and he was despondent and even surly in his mood. Instruction failed on him, and the evangelist and I did our utmost for him and yet the darkness of his mind seemed unpierced by one ray of light. For my part I despaired of him and told Sanderson that I committed Jeff to his tender mercies. I was near to the point of feeling that he had not sense enough to be converted. The only hopeful thing about him was his perseverance. He was always there. He accepted every invitation. He listened with pathetic intensity to all that was said and yet he could not find the way.

On the last night of the meeting it was announced that service would be held next morning to receive those who desired to unite with the church. When the invitation was extended, foremost among the applicants was Jeff with an almost seraphic gentleness and peace about his face. He had not made any open profession and his coming was a surprise. The pastor appeared anxious. Jeff was an unsolved problem to him and he dreaded to tackle him, but after a whispered interview with me, in which he found scant comfort, he finally approached Jeff. He was a prim and particular man, and carefully putting the tips of his right hand fingers on the tips of those of his left he sidled up to the candidate uneasily and said in a sharp and excited tone: "Mr. Cottrell, do you believe that God, for Christ's sake, has freely forgiven all of your sins?"

Jeff looked up in a sudden and startling way, and, twisting his skeleton frame into impossible shapes, or rather out of all shape, and setting his piercing eyes upon the face of the evangelist, said in his quick and energetic way: "Don' kno' ; ca' tell ; wish I did kno' ; I got a heap of sins and I wish they was all forgiven, but when you ask me, 'Has God don' it?' I couldn't tell you ter save my life."

Alas for the discomfited evangelist. He fell back in sore disorder and seemed almost ready to quit the field. But he came again. "Mr. Cottrell," he resumed, with his finger-tips remarshalled for the new attack, "do you feel that you have been converted from sin unto God?"

Open and honest was Jeff and set on telling the truth, but grievously confused, and so he said, "Never heard about that ; don' kno' what 'tis ; don' mean no harm, but don' kno' 'bout being converted to God."

To me there was boundless pathos in Jeff's words. They knocked Brother Sanderson out of his reckonings

and he could say no more. It was his way to ask every candidate the same questions, and when he found that they would not work in Jeff's case he had nothing else to fall back on. The situation was oppressive and things were at a standstill. Coming to my feet I walked up to Jeff and in an offhand way said : "Jeff, tell us what you came up here for ?"

An unworldly light flashed instantly over his thin and tawny face, and with a simplicity that was eloquence itself he said : "I hear you say las' night that folks want to jine this church mus' come up here on this bench and I thought I'd come, 'caus' I wants ter jine."

A sight of him at that moment was something to remember. The power to say something that he was sure of, gave him steadiness and courage and so I caught him with another question : "Why do you wish to join this church ?"

The reason was within him and all of his confusion and hesitation dropped away as he took up and told the story.

"Las' night," he said, rather slowly at first, "when the meetin' brook up I started home 'roun' the mountain ; nuver saw it so dark in my life ; I mighty nigh felt scared ; but you kno' I ain't afraid ; I dun hunt 'roun' dese mountains many nights when 'twas dark as pitch and by myse'f, but I never got rattled tel las' night. I see folks ahead of me with a light wood torch and I hollered to 'em and set out runnin' to ketch 'em. As I was dashin' along de hillside I hooked my foot and down I went and de fust thing I kno' I start rollin' down de hill. I rolled and rolled till I tho't dat I was sinkin' down under de wrath of an angry God. I felt dat He had let me loose and I was 'bout to roll down into de darkness of de pit. 'O Lord,' I cried, 'I am lost, I am lost : save me, save me.' I kno'd den dat none but

God c'ud save me and I flung myse'f on Him. De fust thing I kno' I stopped rollin' and thar I was kinder ca'm and felt that God's arm was under me and I was not 'fraid. While I lay thar I saw sunthin' flash. I don' reck'n it was nothin' ; it look like it was a real flash and befo' I knew it it read, 'By this yer kno',' and I said, 'Kno' what? I wish I did kno', for it look like I don' kno' nothin',' an' den it kinder flashed out and I lay dar jes' as cool and nice and felt the arm was under me still.

"Pres'ntly I see it flash agin. 'Twan't any light, yer understan' ; only in my mind, but it looked plain as day, 'passed from death unto life.' I say, 'W'at dat mean?' and I feel somehow dat God had snatched me from death an' hell and done giv me life. I never felt so quiet an' so happy in my life ; I knew His arms mus' be under me.

"After while, it flash out agin and in my mind I saw it plain as de mornin' sun,—'cause yer luv de bruthrin. I said, 'Who is ther bruthrin?' for I kno' nuthin' 'bout de bruthrin, but it shined so before my mind I say it mus' mean dem folks down at de meetings, for nuv'r was sich folks like dem. I hear 'em pray fur me ; I hear dar heb'nly songs and dey mus' be de bruthrin. Jus' den the flash gits out and fur de fust time I gits to luvin' you same as my bruther. Den I lay thar and my heart look lik' it will break op'n with luv, an' I kno'd sho' dat de evurlastin' arms of God was clean 'roun' me. De flash got away, but I was somehow feelin' as if heav'n warn't very fur off.

"Den it look like de diffrunt pieces of de flash cum tergethur. I nevur heard 'bout it before, so fur as I kin remembur, an' I didn't kno' whar it come from, but dar it was right befor' me, dat you might kno' 'dat you dun pass from death unto life' 'caus' you luv de bruthrin. It all looks mighty new and odd ter me, and I can't tell what

God has dun 'bout my sins nor my soul, but I'm dead certin 'bout lovin' de bruthrin. Maybe I ain' fit fer de church an' I feel I ain't, and ef yer think I won' do I shan't make any fuss 'bout it; only it looks kinder like hometer me here, a kinder fam'ly, an' I'd be de proudest in de wor'ld ter be one of yer."

By this time Jeff was fairly transfigured. He had become wondrously dramatic in his story, had straightened up and was gesticulating until he was talking almost as much with his hands and eyes, his smiles and tears as he was with his lips. A spell of unworldly power was on the people and before them they beheld a new child of God.

When he came to a final pause, neither the pastor nor the people seemed quite sure of their footing. Jeff had not answered the regular questions and had launched out on new fields. Ought they to take a man who didn't know whether his sins were forgiven or that his soul had been converted? Even though their hearts burned within them they hung in doubt and no one seemed disposed to take the lead.

"Jeff," said I to him, "do you feel towards this people as you did not feel before?"

His eyes swept the crowd and he broke into a rippling, contagious, soulful laugh as his eyes swam in tears. At last his lips found speech and he said simply, "Love 'em? Too much ter tell!" He could get no further. I stepped back to the little pulpit and facing the company I said, "Brethren, the old Jeff is gone and we shall see his face no more. This is the new Jeff, the brand snatched from the burning; the man who has passed from death unto life; the man with a new heart; the lover of the brethren. Do not be afraid of him. If he loves you he'll never hurt you nor your church. I move that you receive him for baptism."

When the vote was taken Jeff was filled with such grateful surprise that he sprang to his feet and in a moment his mountain brethren thronged around him and gave him a welcome, the news of which the angels must have carried to heaven.

With that service my work in that meeting ceased and in a day or two I quit the neighborhood, and it was nearly twenty years before I visited that mountain vale again. The Civil War had come with its wreck and desolation, and my recollection of Jeff Cottrell had been written over many a time with the pen of iron. The little church in the valley had prospered. It had erected a new house of worship, and in the exuberance of its joy it had invited the Strawberry Association to hold its annual session with them. It was laid upon me as the representative of Christian education to attend that meeting. I entered the valley on the afternoon before the Association was to meet and was delighted to mark the signs of improvement in roads, in buildings and in farms. These working people were the first to prosper after the war, since they had no shattered fortunes to lament and their own rough, powerful arms as their capital. As on the next morning I ascended to the green plateau on which the old log church had stood, I beheld a modest and beautiful framed house, with its snow-white walls and its green blinds, and it was lovely indeed to my eyes as it stood embowered in its park of chestnut and oak. I hailed the changes with joy unutterable.

Twenty years had played havoc with forms and faces and as I gazed on the groups of people chatting here and there I felt myself a stranger. Only a few seemed to know me and one or two of them timidly advanced and shook my hand. Strolling across the ground I was accosted by an elderly man with a limp in his gait who greeted me with a pathetic touch of hospitality.

"Good-morning, brother," he said most cordially. "We are all glad to see you, and would you not like to have a glass of our cool mountain water?" I turned and saw that he had a pitcher in one hand and a goblet in the other and in some half-conscious way I felt the spell of his earnest, but unrecognized tone of voice. My mind must have been absorbed by other things, for I did not give the man a full and searching look. I thanked him briefly, telling him that I thought it was noble in him to treat a stranger in that way, but remarking that I had come by the spring and had quenched my thirst at the fountain.

"Oh, don't thank me, brother," he said in a tone of self-depreciation. "It is nothing at all; I want no praise; they told me the bruthren, just loads of 'em, was coming and that we mus' all do what we could for them. You see I live too fur ter get any of 'em home with me, and I ain't fix'd up fur 'em anyway, but I felt I mus' do somethin'. So I went down ter Liberty last week and got me this pitcher and goblet. I know'd ther bruthren would come a long ways and git hot and thirsty and mighn't kno' whar the spring was, an' I thought I'd keep my pitcher full of our mountain water,—we got de bes' water in the wor'l up here—an' I would give ev'rybody a drink."

There was something in that nameless and gentle personality which gripped me. In some way I felt the thrill of it and yet some mightier impulse bore me towards the church, and so I turned away from the man and started towards the church.

"Bruther," he said rather decidedly, "you know what ther Marster said 'bout ther cup of cold water and I thought He'd like fer me ter do it."

His words sped to my heart and drew me back. As I looked upon him, bent in form, with his scattered grayish hair and a look of wondrous kindness in his eyes, I felt that I had seen him before.

"Who are you?" I asked, recognizing him in the moment of my asking. For several pregnant seconds he gazed at me until suddenly his face flushed crimson and his lips quivered helplessly. Bending down and setting his pitcher and goblet on the ground, he exclaimed, "Oh, my father in heaven, can it be? Is it you sure enough?" He absolutely wrung his hands in the ardor of his joy.

"And this is Jeff," I said, and our hands were locked in a mighty grasp. He mixed his laughter and his tears but had no words. I broke the silence by simply remarking, "I suppose you still love the brethren, Jeff."

He burst into a peal of happy laughter and said, "I understand you're talkin' 'bout dat night up thar in de mountains when I fell and rolled down de mountain, ain't yer? I thought you'd er forgot that night long befo' this. Yes, I still love 'em; love 'em more an' more and I feel when I do good to them I'm doing hit fer my Marster and ef I do yer reckon He will forget me?"

"No, Jeff," I said with a full heart, "fear not; He will never forget you." Throughout that meeting the stooping brother with the limp could be seen swinging with irregular step over the church grounds, pitcher and goblet in hand, offering the cup of cold water to old and young, rich and poor. It was a task that did not weary.

During the meeting I asked many questions concerning Jeff.

"Oh, yes," said one, "of course Jeff is still a member of our church. It would kill him dead if we should put him out; and besides he is the best we have. He does the loving for all the church. It is impossible to be mad where Jeff is and Jeff is always on hand. He misses nothing at the church and he honestly believes that we have the best church on the earth and the best people in it."

One brother seemed a trifle embarrassed in talking

to me about Jeff. He said that Jeff was improvident and would die poor if he had a million a year. But he was quick to tell me not to think that Jeff was idle or hated work or spent money foolishly. He admitted that he worked hard and was kind to his family, but he seemed to think it was to Jeff's reproach that he never had any money. He said that some of the brethren were quite out with Jeff for his reckless and unthinking habit of giving away practically everything he had, and that the deacons had talked with him about it time and again. The charge against Jeff constituted a new ground for church discipline, and I wished secretly that he might be arraigned before his church as a spiritual spendthrift, but I believe the case never got quite so far.

That was my last meeting with Jeff. Twenty years had done great things for him. His face was ennobled. His manner had shed its crudities; his waggery had been refined into wit; his voice was no longer shrill and cutting; his language revealed the effects of better companionships; his knowledge of the Bible was deep and helpful and his life was radiant with the light of salvation. He never attained to leadership among his brethren except that in all the finer qualities of Christian character he was an example to all. He was happily free from every trace of ambition. He felt unfit for every office and wanted none. The strength of his life was in its transparency, its trueness, its happy harmony with God. It looked as if his business on the earth was to show the intrinsic value and power of a life, which while incapable of high achievement, was four-square towards God and man. Everybody believed in Jeff except those who did not believe in God, and not a few came to believe in God because they believed so thoroughly in Jeff.

Nearly twenty more years took their silent flight, and during all that while I heard little or nothing concerning

my now aged friend, Jeff Cottrell. About ten years ago I met a lady, a member of the mountain church, and I quickly inquired after my saintly old brother.

A look of surprise marked her face. "Hadrn't you heard?" she inquired with emotion. "Why, he died two years ago, and I wonder that the fact had not come to you."

I confess that the death of my beloved Jeff filled me with pensive sorrow. I accounted him a unique character, a trophy of redeeming grace, and one who had played a rare and memorable part in the drama of life. Far stronger than my grief at his going was my anxiety to hear how he went. It is peculiarly interesting to me to see how people die. There is such vital relationship between life and death that they serve to explain and illustrate each other. Those who knew Jeff Cottrell would naturally enough look for something characteristic and notable in his way of dying.

"What of his last days?" I asked the lady. "Oh," she said, "you know that Mr. Cottrell was in a class by himself. We had no other exactly like him. He was our saint and nobody could contest his right to canonization. There was a quality in his religion so mellow, flexible, trustful and tolerant that no one could find a pretext for thinking ill of him. We did not think of him as great, but as true, without guile, never seeking his own, and a stranger to envy. His life had no angles, no cross purposes and no enmities to gratify." This testimonial was invigorating. There had been no breakdown on the road. His life grew in brightness to the perfect day, and he had gone up to heaven in a chariot of victory.

Some time after this conversation I was travelling from Roanoke to Lynchburg and a lady ventured to accost me, saying that she had a matter that was profoundly interesting to her concerning which she wished to

speak with me. It proved to be that the lady in question was the daughter of Mr. Cottrell. She said with directness that there were things that she desired to give concerning her father's death, and as we could not be together long she made haste to tell her story. His end came by the wear out of the machinery, rather than by disease. In his last days it was growingly difficult for him to get to his church. But his love of worship was predominant. It towered over every interest and fought a mighty battle with the infirmities of his last days. He could not bear to lose a service. Churchgoing with him was fellowship with God and with the people. Even when he reached his church breathless and had no strength to hear or pray or sing, he found it the best thing of earth to appear in Zion. There was worship even in his devout going. There were only two points in his last days which seemed in any measure to cause him disturbance.

One ground of his dissatisfaction was that his family and the leading brethren of the church had felt that he had not handled his worldly affairs with intelligence and good judgment. They did not chide him for the lack of energy or a proper desire to make money, but they thought that he lacked discrimination and thrift in the use of his money. It was sometimes charged that he gave away too much. Now he did not care for this charge, except that he felt that he was not understood. It stung him to feel that he was suspected of not estimating the value of money and of not exercising due deliberation in getting rid of it. He was not willing to be considered a fool about money. It was not a case of mortified pride but a rather stalwart conviction that he had been misjudged and he was not willing to die without a proper vindication. He determined to bring the matter to an issue. Inviting the pastor and some of his brethren of the church to come to his house on a given day, and bringing the members of the family

together at the same time, he made what I suppose was beyond all denial the most impressive and convincing statement of his life. He thanked the brethren that they had come and gave thanks to God that he was strong enough to tell them what was in his heart. He said that it was a matter which he felt had never been understood, and while they had all been lovely to him in many ways he could not be happy until he had uncovered his heart and told them all that he felt. He said that soon after entering into the kingdom of God he found himself greatly crippled by his inability to read and by his ignorance of the Bible. He told how that soon after his conversion one passage of Scripture,—just a fragment, in fact, became lodged in his mind, and from that time became the lamp of his life. That passage was,—“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” and that he got from it the idea that to seek the kingdom was to ask that Jesus Christ should sit upon the throne of his being and reign without a rival, and that in order that he might secure the reign of Christ within himself he must put his religion first,—always first in point of time and always first in point of preference,—that Jesus and His claims must always be put first. He said that the word “first” answered all questions with him, that it stood over him and settled what he had to do with all that he had. It became a rule with him, and in time a habit. It led him to do things that he had never thought of doing, to give up things that he loved to do. He came to put his business, his preferences and his family in the second place. It caught him hardest, at first, in the matter of money, of which he never had very much. When he went to the meetings, and when he was told about the things of the Lord which urgently needed money, he felt instinctively that those necessities ranked the comforts and conveniences of himself and his family. He said that often

he went to church with no thought of giving, but that the appeal set the claims of his Master so high that he could not hesitate. He felt that at times he crossed the desires of his family, but that duty seemed so plain he dared not disregard the call. He admitted that sometimes when his brethren upbraided him for giving away so much he felt that he must beyond question be wrong about it, and that oftentimes he made vows that the next time he would refuse to give or else give less. It stung him to feel that his brethren and his family regarded him as a fool, and he would persuade himself that the matter was finally decided that he would never be wheedled into giving so much again, but that just as soon as he came under the operation of the command to put the kingdom of Jesus Christ first, away would go his money and he found that he gave it in riotous delight.

He assured them that he had not brought them there to condemn them nor to justify himself, but simply to tell them one thing. He said that when that Scripture about putting Christ first, entered his mind he thought that it was all there was in the passage. It was amply enough for him since it defined the law of the kingdom as to the rank and rating of things. But he told them that some time ago that passage was read in his hearing, and to his utter surprise he found that there was a promise attached to the command, to the effect that if we did put the kingdom over the common things of life, then all of these common things would be added to us. The doctrine of it all was that if we would put God's cause first, that God would be responsible for our having all the common things of life. "For years," he said, "I did not know that he had put that clause in the covenant of grace." He knew the promises well as to the other world, but that little promise about bread and clothes had escaped him. He added that he did not care to hold the Lord strictly to these words,

but He has held Himself to them. He appealed to his family to know if they had ever lacked for anything, adding that they had not had finery nor jewels nor carriages, but these they did not need. But they could not say that any good thing had been withheld from them. It had been said by some that he would die at last of starvation would have to be taken care of in his old age. He called this up and said in substance :

“Well, I am near my end. The prophets have gone astray. I call you to know that almost every man within ten miles of here has come over these rough roads to see me, often loaded with nice things for me, and many of them have come up to my bed, pulled out their pocketbooks and held them up before me and said, ‘Mr. Cottrell, this pocketbook is yours, and if you need anything call on me.’ I believe if I should give out the word that I needed money it would come in in hundreds. But what breaks my heart is the goodness of the women. My family will tell you to-day that not a day passes but what the ladies from the big houses, the ladies who ride in the carriages, whom I am not fit to visit, have crowded this house with flowers, fruits, nice things for sick people to eat, far more than I needed or could use. They have come without asking and they come all the time. The Lord has made all the men my brothers and all the great ladies my sisters, and they seem proud to serve me who am less than nothing. I tell you this to show you that God is faithful. He keeps His little promises as well as His big ones. He cares for our bodies as well as our souls. The more we forget ourselves the more He remembers us. I shall pass over the line soon, my brethren, and see Him face to face. I hope He will not speak of the little things I have done for Him and I am dead sure that while He may find fault with me about many things He will never complain that I gave too much.” I was told that when Jeff ended his little

sermon it was Pentecost over again. Jeff was exhausted and his heart thumped till you could hear it all over the house, but the very air seemed to be freighted with the fragrance and fruit of the Celestial Canaan. Jeff was not only justified but glorified.

Jeff's daughter related another fact, so weird and fear-some and yet withal so instructive that it ought not to be omitted. During his long sickness Jeff found himself curiously racked by one view of death. He said that as he faced the future there was not a cloud between him and death. His fellowship with his Saviour excluded every doubt and fear, and his soul rested in the fullest assurance of being in his Father's keeping.

The same, he said, was true as he looked beyond death. The hills were bright beyond the grave. No misgiving racked him concerning his final salvation. As he put it, "All is bright up to death, but still brighter beyond death."

But death itself cast a shadow. It had a meaning too serious for him. Its novelty, its incidents and its mysteries as they appeared in the outlook depressed him. He was afraid it would catch him off his guard and that he would not behave well. Over and over again he spoke of it to his household until it became something real, tangible, almost visible. He would say, "It will be all right till I get there, and all right afterwards. But the dying; the thing itself makes me uneasy. I don't know what I'll do when I get there. It looks as if there is a wall or a partition, and that it is hard, and getting through it is what disturbs me. It looks about as thick to me as the length of my finger. It may melt when I get there; may yield when I touch it; or it may stand and be hard to get through. This bothers my mind." With not a few, we imagine, of the children of faith Jeff touches the last conflict of the soul in view of death. After everything

else has been conquered Death holds the field. Crippled and baffled he may be, but the sight of his sceptre is disturbing. The fear of falling may be gone and the hope of heaven may be cloudless, but death itself,—the matter of dying,—still breeds anxiety. Even so peaceful and unworldly a spirit as Jeff, the matchless trophy of Grace, lay waiting for death and yet dreading the meeting.

But the final struggle had to come. It came suddenly. The machinery of his heart had rusted. It ran with jerks and jumps; it registered its movements in thumps; the harbingers of the dread event multiplied day by day and a holy seriousness filled the chamber of the sufferer.

Suddenly there was an outcry of pain, a shudder, one quiver of the limbs, quick successive shocks of the heart and a fast quitting of the breath. The messenger was at hand and Jeff knew it all. He raised his speechless signals and his household were around him. The thought of the past abided,—he touched the partition and found it as seen in the distance. In the faces of his loved ones he saw concern as if they longed to know as to whether it was resistful and hard to get through,—that separating veil of which he had talked so much. Vitality lingered in his hands and stretching out the forefinger of his right hand and placing at its root the forefinger of his left he slowly moved it along up, silently signalling back that he was passing safely through; and when tip touched tip triumphant light mantled his worn face for an instant, his hand shot up for a moment and dropped upon his breast, and death was conquered. He was through the veil and his enfranchised soul was on its flight to the Eternal City.

Already the meek and toiling missionary had gone his way. He and his convert were together again after the battle was over. The evangelist had found his trophy and put it at the feet of his King.

XXII

GLEAMS OF HUMOR ALONG THE WAY

GIVING THE CHURCH BIBLE AWAY

I AM of a denomination which has no ritual, and as a consequence usages sometimes acquire almost the authority of a law in matters of comparative insignificance, and things are sometimes done that are unfitting and possibly at times ridiculous.

I was called to take part, in company with a number of other ministers, in the ordination of a young man, Mr. John B. Williams, to the Christian ministry. It is a worthy custom with us to make one feature of an ordination the presentation of a copy of the Scriptures to the candidate, and very often this proves an impressive and instructive part of the ordaining service, as it indicates our faith in the supreme authority of the Scriptures.

Of course the proper thing in such exercises is for the Bible, used on the occasion, to be an actual present to the candidate, made preferably by the church or sometimes made by the presbytery, or occasionally furnished in some other way.

On this occasion there was no Bible in sight to be given to the preacher, and a minister, of very florid rhetoric and a decidedly self-conscious manner, was chosen to take the part of the Bible presentation. He had the candidate stand facing him, and mounting the rostrum he made quite an ornate and taking speech. When he reached the point where the giving of the Bible would naturally come in, he seized the ponderous pulpit copy of the Bible, weigh-

ing possibly fifteen or twenty pounds, in his hands and stepping to the edge of the platform said :

"And now, my brother, it affords me the very highest pleasure to present to you this copy of God's Word," and was in the act of transferring the book into the hands of the young man.

"Whose Bible is that ?" I asked in a tone of astonished inquiry.

"Why this," said the speaker, "I suppose, belongs to this church."

He was evidently flurried by the interruption.

"Has the church authorized you to give away this Bible ?" I asked in a very serious tone.

"Well,—no," replied the perturbed orator on the platform. "Nothing has been said to me on the subject."

"Then," I said, "you are giving away what does not belong to you."

"You see, doctor," he said, "I am not really giving the book away ; it is a sort of form we go through."

"Then am I to understand that you are merely pretending to give this Bible away when at the same time you are not giving it to the candidate ? Is this a proper affair to be enacted on an occasion so serious as this ?"

By this time the brother bore all the marks of abject wretchedness. He turned with an air of desperate confusion and said, "If you really object to what I am doing I'll put the book back and omit this part of the ceremony."

Things were brought to a critical pass. The discomfited orator was evidently at the end of his row and the people shared in the embarrassment. It is not contended here that this was the wisest manner in which the almost burlesque presentation of the Bible should be dealt with.

Be it said, however, that so many of our ministers had fallen into this unbecoming habit on ordination occasions

that it really seemed necessary to start a revolution even though it amounted to a shock. It so chanced that the young man who was being set apart to the ministry had attended my church in Richmond while taking his college course. He was a charming singer and had rendered valuable service in our choir and also in my Boys' Meeting by his skill and leadership as a vocalist. It became known that I was going to his ordination and my church as a token of grateful recognition put in my hands a handsome copy of the Scriptures to be given to him on that occasion. I had also trained a boy who was in the crowd at a given signal to step forward and hand this Bible to the sorely perplexed brother who had been wrecked in his oratorical flight. As the chairman of the meeting I also occupied the platform, and just as the boy passed the Bible into his hands I arose and after paying a little tribute to the young man and explaining the way in which the Bible had come I requested the brother to present it to the candidate with the good wishes and congratulations of my people in Richmond. It is due to the brother to say that he speedily recovered his equanimity and enthusiasm, and presented the Bible in a way evidently satisfactory to himself and to the fully restored good humor and interest of the audience.

But the story of that attempted giving away of the church Bible took wings and has been flying far and wide since that time, and it may be safely said that it will be many a long summer day before another case is told of an attempt on the part of a preacher to give away a church Bible to a newly ordained Baptist preacher.

During the great Moody meetings in Richmond, a fine but quite eccentric old minister was called on to pray. He had a voice that uttered itself in mild explosions with intervals of the inaudible, and was noted far and wide

for his patience and fidelity in filling his prayers with the minutest detail connected with everything he said. On the occasion mentioned he prayed at great length for those who, on that particular night, had stood for prayer. And then he went back and prayed thus, "We desire, O Father of mercies, to pray also for the conversion of the thirty-two persons who stood up to-night, if our memory is not at fault as to the number, and also for the twenty-six who stood up last night, if our memory serves us right, though it may be, dear Father, that some of those who stood up to-night may have also stood up last night, not being fully satisfied in their minds as to their spiritual condition. In a word, Master, look into all these cases and deal with them according to their peculiar necessities."

In the early part of my public life I became acquainted with a maiden lady whose story ought never to be forgotten. She was celebrated far more for intelligence than for beauty and had a far finer faculty for general usefulness than she had for winning a husband. Years crept in on her and she frankly admitted that the matrimonial outlook was disappointing, but with unruffled serenity she declared that personally she preferred not to marry; her point was that she preferred not to be tied down to the service of one ordinary and exacting man and she insisted that she never would marry unless Providence resorted to compulsory measures; in fact, she went to the extent of saying that if she became forty without a husband, she would accept it as a pleasing token of heaven that she was exempt from marital duty and was left free to devote herself to such forms of benevolences and religious work as came her way.

Sure enough, forty came and came before she got any news from the man of fate. She celebrated the event

with happy demonstrations and declared that hers was the happiest fate that heaven could have decreed for her. She went it that way until she was in her later fifties, and then in a very sudden way she heard a voice that went straight to that centre of her being which had been long walled off from all intrusion.

A modest, stiff-jointed, white-haired deacon of the church was called to bury his wife. There was mourning in the land, and the deacon himself was declared to be heart-broken and evidently he was—for a period of some six or eight months or more.

One Monday morning he drove over to the home of another deacon, who was a brother of the unmarried and elderly Miss Sally. It chanced that her brother was out on the farm and it fell to her lot to welcome the bereaved, whose hat still carried the symbol of mourning. She gave him a great welcome, descanted generously on the noble qualities of his departed spouse, expressed sympathy, that could not be adequately expressed, with the deacon, and administered religious consolation with an extravagant hand. The deacon was but faintly responsive, though gratefully accepting the kind things said of his wife and said also of his affliction. He was a man of few words, anyway, and in a combat with the conversational abilities of Miss Sally, he stood only half a chance, but even hair-lipped and tongue-tied widowers usually make themselves heard sooner or later, and it was not long before he led Miss Sally to understand that about the only balm that could heal his wounded spirit would be her free and undivided affection.

She was duly shocked but not fatally. She expressed surprise in several dialects, spoke of her determination, made long ago, not to marry, and finally rounded up with the assertion that she could not even consider the proposition until she had consulted with her brother

James, and until she could have time for considering the matter from quite a number of standpoints.

As for time, the deacon intimated that time was a scarce article with him, and waiting a lonesome business, and he also inquired as to the whereabouts of her brother James. He was informed that her brother was in the corn-field, below the garden, and Miss Sally obligingly consented to have him sent for. She slipped out and summoned a colored boy and ordered him to go after his Mars' James, and to tell him that he was wanted at the house at once. The boy was also ordered to "go quick." I knew the said brother James quite well. An odd, simple-hearted, unsystematic and excitable man he was, but honest as the daylight, and he had long ago laid his will at the feet of the female department of his household. He steamed into the yard in a few minutes, almost dead with palpitation of the heart, supposing that the house was on fire or somebody was dead. Miss Sally drew him aside, told the new secret and asked his counsel. For once brother James bore himself resplendently. He declared that her wish was his law, and expressed the opinion that she was old enough to decide for herself. She returned to the parlor where the deacon, with his snowy locks and enchanted soul, awaited her with anxiety.

"Well," she said, "I have had an interview with my brother James, and he looks upon the proposition as one that is honorable to our family and complimentary to me, and readily gives his full consent that you and I shall cast our lots together."

Two weeks afterwards a staid little group, including a preacher, gathered in the country parlor, and Miss Sally's life purpose to be an old maid floated away, and she bloomed out in modest bridal array as a deaconess.

Concerning Miss Sally there is a story which will be very slow to die. She was a woman so unworldly in her

spirit and so abstemious in her tastes, that she allowed herself very rare contact with aught that savored of worldliness. Now and then there would grow up in her a yearning for things visible, sensational and exciting, but her feelings were always walled off from anything that suggested the least moral impropriety. For a long time she stood aloof from the agricultural fair which met every autumn in Richmond. The occasion took on too much sport, noise and gaming for her. As from time to time she heard of the fine horses, cattle, fowls, swine, machinery, ladies' work and other things which seemed to her as innocent as the very trees which stood in the yard of the old Bethlehem Church, she had an acute hankering after a visit to the fair, and finally it was decided that she should go. She had rich and admiring friends in the city and notified a gentleman, who was always called Josiah, that she would be down on a certain morning and would expect him to be her escort for the day.

A finer gentleman than Josiah Ryland never set foot on Virginia soil. He determined to lay himself out for the pleasure of serving Miss Sally, as she was called after marriage, just as she was before, and he wrote her a note, rich in welcome and in love. They took the train down in the city and steamed up to the great enclosure in which the vast show was in full blast. He bought tickets, bade her to pull on his arm under all the strains and pressures of the day and they walked in. She went wild over the poultry exhibit; she fairly had heart disease when she saw the huge, sluggish porkers and was almost ready to embrace some of the beautiful cows and calves which she found in their stalls. Presently, Josiah suggested to her that there would be more interest to her in some of the other departments, and that they had better go on their way. As they went along, they crossed a very beautiful track and Miss Sally stopped to admire it.

"You have mighty pretty roads over here, Josiah," she said. "You certainly beat us on roads; we got nothing of this sort in Chesterfield."

"This is not a road, Miss Sally," Josiah replied in a tone of gentle chiding.

"I know better," said Miss Sally, in a tone almost indignant. "I don't claim to know as much as you town people know, but I have got sense enough to know a road when I see it; and if this is not a road, I would like to know what it is."

"This," said the masterful Josiah, solemn as the king of Persia, on the outside, but having a very circus of amusement on his inside, "is what we call over here a race-track."

"What, Josiah, a race-track? You don't mean that you have races at this thing, do you?"

Josiah, in a truly regretful tone, admitted that they did race horses there, and thereupon Miss Sally demanded with noisy vehemence that she be taken out of the place at once, asking Josiah what he supposed the people of Bethlehem would think of her if they heard that she had been attending horse-races in the city of Richmond. She was up for war and for getting out in short order. Josiah took out his watch and noted the time. He told her that it was then not quite eleven, and that the races were scheduled to begin at twelve. He assured her that she could see quite a deal of what was perfectly innocent and then have time for withdrawing before the horses began to run. Miss Sally was a little incredulous and felt that she was in a world which did not suit her, and it was only after she had extracted most solemn and repeated promises from Josiah that nothing should happen to her, that she consented to go on. They went into the machinery building, the agricultural building, the ladies' rooms, where needlework, pickles, bread, cake and ever

so many other things greatly delighted the innocent-hearted Miss Sally. Finally they came in sight of an odd structure quite high up in the air.

"What is that, I'd like to know?" said Miss Sally. "I never saw a thing like that before in my life and I can't see what they want with it."

"That," said Josiah, "is the judges' stand."

"None of your foolin', now, Josiah," she said, with a sharp look; "you know they don't hold court up there in a place like that; what can judges do up there?"

For once Josiah's stately dignity broke its holding-back straps and he told Miss Sally, in the midst of much merriment and laughter, that the judges who occupied that lofty perch did no business except to decide which of the horses won the prizes as they ran in the races.

Miss Sally flamed with righteous wrath. She declared that it was unworthy of men to countenance the cruelty of the race-track, and that all of it ought to be stopped. Josiah told her that her view of the subject was most creditable to her, and if her doctrines could be universally adopted, Virginia would have the greatest government in the world.

As they moved along, they neared the railing which barred off the race-track from the rest of the grounds, and a number of men were leading some exceedingly beautiful horses up and down the track. Miss Sally caught sight of these horses; she had a soul for horses; a pretty horse was a poem to her, and she was outspoken in her admiration of the horses and especially of one. She stopped outright and fixed her thoughts on that horse.

Josiah took out his watch and gave Miss Sally a shake and said, "We had better get out of here, for it is almost time for the races."

Miss Sally seized his arm and told him in fiery terms that he knew better than to let her be caught in those

grounds when any of that wicked racing was going on. Accordingly, Josiah began to pull his saintly charge in the direction of the gate but she stopped.

"Josiah," she said, "did you notice that gray horse that they were leading along beyond that fence?"

Josiah admitted that the horse did not command his notice and he also worked in another suggestion that they had better pull for the gate.

"Now, look here, Josiah," Miss Sally said, "I would like for you to see that gray horse. I never saw anything finer and I'd like for you to go back with me and look at it," and Josiah, with some outward show of remonstrance, let her lead him back to the fence. There was the horse, and Miss Sally went into ecstasies. "Oh, you dear beauty!" she said. "Look at her, Josiah; look at her neck, how finely it arches; look at her ears, how prettily they stand up; look at her eye with the sense of men in it; look at her legs, so trim and fine."

Josiah gave her a rather violent pull and told her that it was of the greatest importance that they should get out within a few minutes or it would go to Bethlehem that she had attended the races.

"You dare say so," Miss Sally said, scornfully. "Take me out of here; I'll blame you long as I live if I get mixed up with this horse-racing," and away they went towards the distant gate.

Just then, however, there was a great roaring shout on the right and Miss Sally unconsciously turned her head that way and asked what it meant. Josiah, with gravity depicted on his face, told her that the horses had started, and her quick eye caught the gray as she swept along in plain view. Miss Sally went wild with excitement.

"Oh, Josiah! will you look?" she exclaimed excitedly. "Just watch the gray. Ain't she going? don't

she fly? did you ever see anything like it?" Then the horse turned the circle and was out of sight.

Miss Sally turned upon the wicked Josiah and fairly blasted him with her scornful indignation. "Allow me to say, sir, that if you are not willing to take me out of this place, show me the gate; I have got sense; I can go out of here without you and if you want to stay here and watch these races and bet on them, if you choose, you can do it; I am a-going out of here."

Josiah melted with penitence and told her he always was bad and did not believe that he would ever recover. He took all the blame and was making a valiant effort to take Miss Sally to the gate.

About that time the people began to shout over on the other side of the grounds and their roar was tremendous.

"I never saw such a pack of fools in my life, Josiah," she said; "what on earth is the matter with them?"

"Why, Miss Sally, the horses are coming back around that way."

"Take me out; take me out; take me out!" she shouted, to the amusement of many around her. Unconsciously, however, she turned her eye in the direction that Josiah told her the horses were coming around. She caught sight of the gray as she swept with the speed of light along at the head of the racers. Miss Sally forgot everything on earth, her beloved Bethlehem included. She turned full face, screamed and shouted at the top of her voice, "Go it, Gray! Look, Joshua! Go it, Gray! Did you ever see anything like it? Hurrah for the gray! Hurrah for the gray! Go it, Gray! Josiah, I bet you a dollar that the gray gets there first." The gray did beat.

It is believed there never was as much holy indignation turned loose on the fair-ground at one time as Miss Sally set free when the thing was over. She gave Josiah

a lambasting from which he never recovered. She turned her back on him bodily and said that she did not want him to go out with her. But she wished it understood, when she got back to Bethlehem, she was so offended by the horse-racing that she deserted Josiah and went out by herself. Josiah was imperturbable, the essence of nobility, and as serious as the Supreme Court of the American Republic. He told Miss Sally that it was all right, nobody need know anything about it, he understood that this matter of horse-racing was against her conscience and he did not blame her in the least.

It is not claimed that this story is outwardly consistent, and there is not the faintest suspicion as to the sincerity and devoutness of Miss Sally. Bethlehem never had a more devoted member; religion never had a truer friend nor public morality a more valiant guardian than Miss Sally. At the same time, some of her forebears had handed down to her a sporting strain, a love of contest, a pride in horses and a joy in having your side beat, that got in its work that day. Miss Sally knew that it was not her, not the best of her, that went wild on the horse-race, and so fully was she convinced of this that she thought it was no part of her and, likely enough, in the Lord's eyes it was no part of her.

THE MAN AND HIS OATS

The ludicrous and the serious, apparently so congenial, often dwell in adjacent tenements, with the separating partitions so thin that one can sometimes break through and subdue the other. In the story to follow I give a glimpse of one of the oddest, most ascetic, and yet withal the most humorous of men.

I went out from Richmond to help a very young pastor in a very weak church in revival services. The young man had worked wisely, and the outlook was inspiring.

He took me to the home of an elderly merchant farmer to spend the night, warning me as we went along that I would find a bundle of eccentricities incarnated in our host for the night. I can testify that the old gentleman lived up to his recommendations that night. His English was badly shattered, but he was quick of mind, brimming with humor, sarcastic, defiant and skeptical. As soon as supper was over he opened fire. He slashed the preachers, plucked the churches, and sneered revivals out of countenance. I think I never heard any man make a more clever or damaging assault upon religion as embodied in individuals and churches of that day. Much that he said was true, and so intermixed with what was not true, that it was hard to handle him. Indeed I gave him full rein, and expressed approval of many things that he said. He ran riot with invective, and seemed for a while intoxicated with the sense of victory.

Finally he got down to details, and among other things denounced the modern way of receiving people into the membership of the church. "I believe," he said, "that when persons join the church they ought to be required to stand up before the congregation and begin at the beginning and tell step by step the path by which they have come. If they are really converted, as they say they are, they ought to be made to get up and tell their experience." Turning suddenly to me, he asked with great intensity if I did not agree with him. It was about the first opportunity he had given me to say anything.

"Well, now," I said, rather slowly, "I do agree with you that when people who come to join the church can stand on their feet and tell distinctly and impressively the story of their conversion, it is a noble thing to do. Such a testimony refreshes the church, and goes home to the hearts of others. But I must say to you that when I joined the church I was a verdant mountain lad, never

had uttered a word in public in my life, had a very dim idea as to what I would be expected to tell, and I really believe if I had tried it, I should have gone all to pieces. Indeed it frightened me to leave my seat, and go forward when I presented myself to the church for membership. Now you have a glib and ready tongue, and I suppose if you were going to join the church it would be easy for you to stand before any assemblage and tell the story of your conversion without the least confusion." He sat silent for a minute and said with quite a change in his tone, "I couldn't do it to save my life."

Then I said quietly, "You put it a little too strong that time, didn't you?"

"Expect I did," he said bluntly. "But never mind about that. Let us have prayers and go to bed." His wife reported the next morning that he did not rest well during the night.

He came out on the porch next morning and announced with dogged emphasis that I need not expect him to go to church that day, and shot back into the house as if stricken with terror. I said nothing at the time. When he reappeared to beg that I would not think hard of him for not going to church, as it was very important that he should look after his oats, which, owing to excessive rains, were in danger of rotting, "By all means you must go," I said with cheerful earnestness. Back he rushed again into the house. But quite soon was back again.

"No use of talking," he said, "I've been out to see about the oats, and they are in very bad condition. I cannot think of going to church to-day."

"Let the oats rot," I said, emboldened by his defensive attitude. "Your soul is worth all the oats in this world, and I cannot leave you here to-day. Get ready and let us start." He hardly waited for my words before he was gone. In a little while his wife, a noble Christian woman,

who had been watching the battle from the back porch, dashed in through the hall and said with a glad whisper, "He's going. He says that you seem to be so anxious about it he will have to go."

The fact is, the Lord's hand was upon him. That day he took a stand for Christ and was a new man. Some time afterwards I asked him how his oats came out and he smilingly said every grain of them rotted.

I told him I was glad they did, else he might have felt that God worked a miracle to pay him for going to church, adding that the Lord did not pay people to be converted.

THE ARTICHOKE

In my early ministry I attended a great religious assembly in Charleston, S. C., the members of which were munificently entertained in the Charleston homes. There was an exceedingly rich banker who applied for several ministerial celebrities, who were to be in attendance upon the convention, but unluckily for him, all those famous men had been spoken for and his house was left desolate. It grieved him exceedingly, and he complained quite obstinately about it to Colonel Presley, then a noted lawyer of that city and a gentleman of most attractive social qualities. The colonel told him not to be downhearted but to prepare the very finest dinner that had ever loaded his table and leave to him the task of selecting the guests. The colonel selected a number of the convention gentlemen who were not encumbered with extraordinary fame, and who were not in peril of being entangled with many engagements. Under this arrangement and through the partiality of Judge Presley, I was selected as one of the guests for the dinner. Be it said that the dinner was to begin at 3:30, though possibly it may have been delayed somewhat, and at a quarter of eight it had ever so many courses yet to come, and I was

constrained to ask to be excused at that time because I had an important engagement for supper.

The supply of ladies for the dinner was pitiably scant, and of the few, Colonel Presley and myself fell heir to one, though candor compels me to say that Colonel Presley heired about nineteen-twentieths of her. And in their infrequent periods of silence, with gracious benevolence she turned to see how I was prospering under the embarrassment of my situation. This arrangement did not help me any, and I was glad enough to be left in silence to keep up my guards against such misadventures as might befall me in my limited experience in Charleston festivities.

Another misfortune of the dinner which struck me was the fact that I sat at the corner of the table where the serving of the courses commenced, so I had no precedent to aid me in tackling such dishes as I had not met with before. At first the lady at my side took enough interest in me to cause her to turn around with the beginning of the course and see that I was started off in a respectable way. In the course of time, or rather in the course of many courses, the good lady was so interested with the party of the second part on the other side, so delighted with her dinner or possibly so tired of her stupid attendant on the other side, that she ceased to keep watch over me.

The butler swung up to me with a vast tray in his hands, and some of the most extraordinary things lay in it that I had never seen. I eyed them and knew at once that I had never seen them. He was superbly dressed, very stately in manner, and I confess that I was a little afraid of him anyhow. He stood there as if he had come to spend the evening, and finally he asked me if I would have one of the "artichokes"? Now in old Virginia in our vegetable garden we raised a thing which we called artichokes which somebody said was a poor and unrecog-

nized relative of the sweet potato. But the Charlestonian artichoke was quite a different thing. It was as large as a grown man's fist and struck me as a cross between a pineapple and a pine burr. Being all alone in the world and nobody to advise me, I said to the butler with great deference that I would not have an artichoke that day. He gave me a look which expressed several opinions and went on, and everybody took an artichoke but me. Meanwhile the butler broke the prolonged engagement between the colonel and the fair lady in question and the latter turned to see how I was doing. I was not doing at all! I was sitting there the incarnation of idleness and awkwardness. "Oh," she said, "you haven't any artichoke. John, why didn't you give Doctor Hatcher an artichoke? Bring the tray here at once!" and asked me if I did not like artichokes. I intimated to her that I had taken lessons in artichokes in Virginia in the primary class, but that my education had been totally neglected as to Charlestonian artichokes, and that under the uncertainties of the case, I had decided not to take any artichokes in my course. She would not hear to it. John came back with the artichokes and he swung out two plates, one for the artichoke and one for the peelings. With altogether unnecessary emphasis she instructed me how to tackle the mysterious thing and did it in such a way that the eyes of all at the table were turned to me, and I discovered an unmistakable twinkle in them. I turned as red as the artichoke and I wished that either I or the artichoke had never been born. The butler showed decided malice in selecting the biggest one on the tray and landed it on my plate. The lady told me that it was the most delicious thing in the world, but that the delicious part of it was hidden away on the inside, and that I must pull out each one of the little ears that shot out in scores if not in hundreds all over it, and that some of it

would be on the end of each one of these little ears and that I must stick each into the butter and salt that lay ready at my hand, and then bite off the end and throw the other part into my other plate. It seemed to me that there were about four or five hundred of these little ears, and I began with an assumed familiarity on the artichokes that I hoped would deceive the very elect, and I pulled out these little things one by one, dabbled them in the melted butter and salt, took my bite at them and then put the other end into the extra plate. As soon as I began to work at it my friend remembered that one of the most charming gentlemen in the world was on the other side of her and she dropped me and was happy once more. I do not wish to lie about it, but I express the opinion that I pulled out, buttered, bit off and threw away somewhere between two hundred to two hundred and fifty of those little earlets. My arm got tired, my jaw got resentful for having to make so many bites with so little results, and all the while my palate was aching for the good part that was on the inside, of which I had been told.

The kindest of women was a long way from remembering that I was in the world, much less that I was in a sea of troubles with the artichoke. Feeling sure that she was not coming back I stopped buttering and stopped biting ; I had filled one plate and surreptitiously secured another and began to pile into that, and finally the hated thing was utterly demolished by the stroke of my knife. There seemed to be a sort of solid base on top of which lay a substance, hot, snow-white and innocent-looking. I said to myself, "I have reached it at last ; this is the inner essence ; this is the thing she told me about ; this is the most delicious thing in the world !" not the least evidence of which I had gotten by the several hundred end bites which I had taken at the buttered and salted roots. I took my knife and whacked off an unnecessarily large

portion of the tempting essence, as I supposed it was. I applied the melted butter and mounted the formidable slug full into my mouth. I noticed at once that it had some sharp points in it, and as I turned my molars down on it, my gums suffered several abrasions, but I thought it was a part of the show and belonged to the preliminaries, but the more I ground the thing the more it went into me, but that was not the serious aspect of the case at all. The more I brought my teeth down upon it, the more it came back. It had a rebellious swell, and instead of my extricating sweetness from it, I gradually turned it into what seemed to be a small haystack, insurgent, irrepressible, and sticking into the roof of my mouth, into my gums, fastening itself into my teeth and swelling more and more all the time. There I was with my mouth crammed down to the pit of my throat with something that had been swelling from the time it went into my teeth and which swelled more every time my teeth bore down upon it and kept on swelling after I had stopped bearing down upon it. At last there came a scream and the outcry belonged to the lady at my side, and for that moment at least the colonel was left out and I was brought to the centre of the stage. She saw that something had been cut off from the substance that I have described before and she looked aghast. "Oh, what a mistake, what a mistake you have made," she almost screamed; "that part is not eatable at all. That's what they call the choke." Under other circumstances I should have informed her that I had never seen anything in my life that was more appropriately named, but for reasons that I do not give now, I did not make the remark. "You must get it out of your mouth and just as soon as possible," she said with an emphasis that brought towards me another look from the entire table, every one of whom seemed to be enjoying their artichokes and un-

wantonly enjoying mine also. I told her, as best I could under the circumstances, that I was willing to have the thing out of my mouth and that I had energetically tried to get it out of my mouth by the usual process that I used when I had an eatable thing in my mouth, but that I must frankly say that with all the pressure that I could bring to bear, I had not been able to make it budge. Then it was that my humiliation touched bottom and I had to take the thing out then and there. At least, as much of it as did not stick into my gums or run into the roof of my mouth, or was not bristling all over my tongue or had not gotten too far for recovery.

I do not think it is necessary to continue this lamentable story any longer. Several months after that I stepped onto a train in the mountains of Virginia at the hour of midnight and took my seat in the passenger car. It was a cramped and joyless ride, but not long after the train had started I heard a gurgling laugh behind me, and it was very clearly evident that a man was responsible for it. It was not my gurgle, however, and I set about to forget it. But it continued, until finally I heard in a subdued, mischievous tone, the terrible word, "artichoke." It gave me a wrench, and it was followed by a louder laugh, and then the word was repeated again, and it was ingrained in my soul that the villain who was thus carrying on behind me had me for his victim. I straightened up, and with haughty isolation I started back to the water-cooler. There he was, the inevitable and remorseless Presley. We fell into each other's arms. He told me that he had been in the mountains of Virginia for a few days, but that he had spent his summer on the beach below Charleston, and that he and the banker had their summer homes close to each other. He added that it was always once a day, and if there was much company, twice a day, that they gathered on the veranda and re-

heard the story of the artichoke. He also informed me that the neighbors came in to hear the story, and then went out and brought in other neighbors, and the story was told again.

Let the story pass, but I have one grievance. He promised to send me a box of artichokes to Virginia, but up to the time that this story is told, I have not seen another artichoke.

XXIII

THE HOME-COMING

IT has been my happy fortune to mix with the common people through all the years of my ministerial life. I have gone into their plain homes, ate many a meal which had been prepared with no thought of company, slept in their plain beds, talked far into the night around their fireside, and bowed with them at their altars and sought for heaven's blessing. As a pastor, much of my best ministerial inspiration was caught in the little houses of my people. Sometimes in their plain little parlors, often by the fire in the dining-room, and times uncounted in the kitchens, where the housewife was cooking her simple meal, or possibly bending over her wash-tub. In some way, I loved God better when I was down among the poor, and really picked up more in the way of human sympathy, spiritual insight and heavenly thought than I ever got anywhere else. I have felt sorry for ministers who belittled or dreaded the pastoral visit, but I never sympathized with them. I never got much by visiting the rich, for they did not have much that I coveted, but my mixing with the godly poor always enriched me. They gave me gladness, they gave me love, they gave me glints of happy humor, they gave me sermons and they gave me hope. Truly, I would like to write a book of the plain houses, with their contentments, their romances, their sorrows and their aspirations, the memory of which is ever with me and the comfort of it, too.

At a certain railroad junction, not far from Richmond, there was a water station for the Narrow Gauge, as it was called, and the water was pumped by a noisy, wheezing little engine, and that engine was managed by quite an elderly man whom I used to see oftentimes when I passed that way, always in his working clothes and blacked up with the smoke and cinders of the engine-room. We used to chat a little and I found him with a heart full of the love of God, of which he sometimes spoke with a gentleness and a glow that lasted me for days afterwards.

They built a little church a little way off and had some of us out from Richmond to dedicate it. It fell to my lot to go with this rugged old man home for my dinner. It was a full mile we walked, and he was sorely crippled in some way, and it took us quite a time to make the journey, and on the way he told me a story.

"My boys," he said, "are bad boys."

That was his solemn deliverance, and I prepared myself for a tragic story.

"Are they bad?" I asked, with undisguised anxiety.

He broke into a laugh that had in it the sweetness of a better world than this.

"If they were bad, as some boys are bad, mother would be a dead woman," he said.

The way he called that word "mother," evidently applying it to his wife, was a poem within itself. It told right out the greatness of his love, the devotion of the mother to the children, and incidentally let out the fact that their boys were just the boys for them to be proud of.

"Why did you call them bad?" I asked, in a dogmatic and unsatisfied tone.

"Why," he said, "every one of them takes to railroading. They wouldn't hurt a hair of my head, and as for mother, they'd die for her,—die any day it was necessary ; but it looked like they were born with railroads in

their blood. The toot of an engine made 'em crow when they were babies, and, like ducks to the water, they took to the railroad.

“It went awful hard with mother, but she made a condition that those boys have always stood up to, except the last time, and that was that they did not come home last Christmas. They might come any time and they'd git it good when they got there, and they might stay away and she would have nothing to say, but the law went forth that they were to eat their Christmas dinner with mother. They got on different roads and did different kinds of work. One of 'em was on this road, and he had a blow when he brought his engine by—a blow for mother. You see, the road is not far from the house, and day or night she'd know that blow, and it did her most as much good as if the boy had kissed her. She lived all the year round for the joy of having the boys home for Christmas, that's what mother did. And they would come: they came years and years. Sometimes it would be way into the night of Christmas Eve, and once or twice in the Christmas morning.

“And you ought to have seen mother on Christmas Day. I told her she overdid it entirely and that Christmas dinners would see me in the poorhouse yet; but do you reckon she cared? She was at it for days and days beforehand, fixing her spareribs, her sausage, her polk ham, her turkey gobbler, her cakes, her pies of all sorts, her custards, her big apples, her canned peaches; bless me, 'twas enough for a camp-meeting, and all of it for them railroading boys.

“I reckon I ought to say that they were worthy of all that they got; not a drop of whiskey would they touch; no bad company for them; no puttin' on airs when they come home. Mother said they were just as clean innocent as when they used to lay sleeping on her breast. I

reckon she was partial,—all the mothers seem so to me, but I kinder felt about the same as mother did. In fact I couldn't wait to see 'em patient as she could, but I reckon she didn't talk about it much as I did and maybe felt it more than I did, for she thought all the world of her three boys.

“ Well, one Christmas things went wrong. The boys didn't tell us certain they were coming ; they didn't think it worth while ; we knew they'd come when they could and there wasn't any time day or night when mother wasn't ready to open the door for them. Christmas Eve came and no boys. Christmas morning came ; no boys. Dinner came and 'twas the biggest of all. Mother looked so serious when she was fixin' it that I had to go out into the back yard two or three times and cry because she looked so pale and uneasy. We hardly touched the dinner. Trains came along and we'd look down to see, but they didn't come, and the sun went down on Christmas Day and not one of our boys had stepped on our porch or jumped in to hug mother. I don't reckon I ever felt more awful, though I might have stood it if I could have kept my eyes off of mother's face. We sat up late and talked and wondered and felt very miserable, but just before late bedtime one of the boys, our baby boy, mother always calls him 'Baby,' he got home. It almost made the matters worse with us. It looked like Christmas was not only gone but that our family was broken up. We talked right late, but our poor boy had worked two solid nights so as to get home at all, and he got sleepy and mother told him he must go up-stairs and rest. Our chamber was down-stairs ; we always slept down there ; though I don't think mother slept at all those nights.

“ As for me I am a heavy sleeper ; I am so fleshy and knocked up with rheumatism that I'm dead tired when night comes and mother says that she sometimes thinks I

am dead, having died suddenly in the bed,—so still she says I always lie.

“That night the trials of the day and the grief on mother’s face knocked me up and for a long time I couldn’t sleep a wink ; but way towards day I dozed off, but suddenly I heard a step on the back porch. Mother sprang clean out of the bed and said as she sprang, ‘There he is ; that’s Ben’s step ; blessed be God, he has come at last.’

“They had it out on the porch. All I had to do was to touch a match and start the blaze, and I did that before I saw Ben, and almost in no time the shavings and dry wood were shooting their blazes up the chimney. We sat and talked quite a while, when suddenly Ben said :

“ ‘What about the boys, mother ? Have they come ?’

“ ‘Just look at that,’ I said. ‘Ben, you filled us up so that we positively forgot that we had any other boys.’

“Then it was that we told him that his little brother was up-stairs, and up he jumped and was about to dash up the steps, but mother said in a sweet way :

“ ‘Don’t wake him, Ben ; baby looked so tired to-night,’ and Ben gave it up and we talked some more.

“ ‘Mother,’ said Ben, ‘what’s become of my ’cordion ?’

“I hadn’t told you that Ben was a musician. He always loved his accordion and mother never got tired of listening to him. You better believe that she had that ’cordion nicely wrapped up and put away where nothing could harm it. She was up quick enough, I tell you, and soon handed it to Ben. It made my eyes wet to see how glad Ben was to get the old instrument in his hands again. He worked it a little bit and got it fixed and then he struck to playing. Of course mother couldn’t stand it ; it brought up so much to her, and while she didn’t move I saw the tears shining on her happy old face and I felt just too happy to move or speak.

“Presently Ben began to sing. He was a powerful singer, I tell you he was. He didn’t have one of them loud, rough voices, but there was something in his singing that went to your bones. You could feel it going all through you, and folks used to come miles to our house before Ben went away to get him to sing for them, and he was always ready. He didn’t put on any foolish airs about it.

“ ‘Mid scenes of confusion and creatures’ complaints.’ That of course was ‘Home, Sweet Home.’ It was always mother’s favorite, and it looked like it come in that night nicer than anything as he went on singing it, and when he got to Home, Sweet Home, I really thought he would break down. I never heard his voice tremble so, and as for mother, she just put her head down on my shoulder and sobbed it out all right.

“It seemed to wake up something new in Ben, and he pretty soon got into the second verse, and when he struck the chorus I never heard anything like it. I really thought it could be heard all the way to heaven, and I reckon it was. It just topped off anything that I had ever heard. I don’t know whether it was because Ben had improved or because he got inspired that night. His voice seemed to fill the whole house, and I almost felt like I could fly, and when he repeated the chorus I heard a noise up-stairs. Little brother,—we never could stop calling him that,—had sprung out of bed, and he took up the tune,—he up-stairs and Ben down-stairs, and they both sang; but it wasn’t long before they were in each other’s arms, and there in the late night, us four were happy together,—too happy ever to tell; if heaven will be that happy when we get there it will be all that I could ask and a thousand times more than I could ever expect. Presently things quieted down some and we talked together until the dim light of the morning dawned on the

window, and Ben struck up his song again and we all sang it. Mother sang like an angel; at least I thought so, and the boys just outwent themselves, and would you believe it, while we were all singing and fairly shouting together, all in a twinkling the back door flew wide open and in jumped somebody. It was Tom, our middle boy. He was the last to get there, but he was there. Don't forget that; he was there. It took him a long time and he was late, but there he was in the gray of that morning, and what do you reckon mother did? She sprang up on her feet and made a little speech. Just think of mother making a speech; but she did it just the same, and all right, and this is what she said:

“‘We got the almanac wrong. We thought it was Christmas yesterday, but we know better now. This is our Christmas. Our best Christmas; the best Christmas anybody ever had, and just as they had always done before my boys are home for Christmas Day.’

“And, doctor, would you believe it, I, poor, blundering, stupid old me, had to turn round and make 'em a speech too. What did I say? I said, ‘Mother, that's the way with our boys; they always come home. They will go away; we can't help that; we have to separate, but, mother, they always come back, and after a while you and I will move away ourselves, and we'll have another home far better than this, up in our Father's house, and we'll be looking out and wondering when our boys will come. They may be late; they may not come together, but they will come, and we'll all be home for a Christmas that will never end.’”

